Tabarées (M. M. de)

MEMOIRS, ANECDOTES,

AND

CHARACTERS

OF THE

COURT OF LEWIS XIV.

TRANSLATED FROM

LES SOUVENIRS,

OR,

RECOLLECTIONS OF MADAME DE CAYLUS,

Niece to MADAME DE MAINTENON:

BY

The Tranſlator of the Life and Writings of NINON DE L'ENCLOS. Mrs Griffith.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

IN the following work there are a great variety of characters moſt admirably drawn, with many extraordinary memoirs, and curious anecdotes relative to a late and intereſting period of hiſtory, interſperſed with ſeveral moſt excellent obſervations and reflections upon life, which muſt render it extremely improving, as well as entertaining to the reader.

The writer was niece to Madame de Maintenon, and reared and educated in her family, ſo that her information (with regard to the particulars from whence ſhe has framed her notes) muſt have been ſufficiently authentic;

authentic; and the ſenſe and ſpirit of the manner of her relating them prove her alſo to have been capable of digeſting the collection, and ſeparating the true from the falſe.

Madame de Caylus was diſtinguiſhed equally for her wit and beauty. They tell an extraordinary effect of her attractions. The Marquis de la Fare had never written a line of verſe in his life, till about the age of ſixty becoming acquainted with her, the charms of her face and perſon firſt inſpired him with a ſpirit of poetry, and he addreſſed an ode to her, which was not only the firſt, but the beſt, of a volume that he afterwards publiſhed. I ſhall attempt a tranſlation, or rather an imitation of it, here:

An HYMN to CUPID.

Oppreſs'd with ſadneſs, and to ſpleen a prey,
Without a hope, almoſt without deſires,
How I regret the joys long flown away;
The grateful fuel to my youthful fires.

And are they gone! for ever gone! I cried:
Too cruel love, recall them, or I die;
Thou who haſt all that's worth of life ſupplied,
Thou maſter of my ſong and revelry.

Blind god, prevent my tedious days to waſte
In lifeleſs yawns, or cold indifference;
With art divine retrieve the minutes paſt,
Or ſuffer not another to commence.

While thus I pray'd, the deity appear'd,
Cleaving with amorous ſpeed the liquid air;
My gloom diſperſes, every pulſe was cheer'd,
As the kind god did this beheſt declare.

No longer, Thyrſis, of thy fate complain;
No more a life of apathy upbraid:
I come to put an end to all thy pain;
Caylus ſhall vouch the promiſe I have made.

But the reader is not here to expect a methodical compilement of facts, according to the orderly ſucceſſion

ceſſion of events; for the good lady frequently makes the preſent time ſtand ſtill, to retrace the paſt, or anticipate the future, juſt as the ſeveral ſubjects happen to recur to her memory, as ſhe indeed confeſſes herſelf, in the very firſt paragraph.

But does not this give her writing the free, eaſy, and engaging air of a correſpondence, or a converſation, rather than the dull regularity, and ſtiff reſtraint of narrative? which muſt render it infinitely more agreeable to a reader of taſte or ſpirit. They who think otherwiſe would examine Æneas's voyage by the map. She does not drag you a journey along a tedious and a duſty turnpike, but takes you a pleaſant airing through a princely demeſne. The *Cabriole* is at the door. So adieu!

The TRANSLATOR.]

MEMOIRS, ANECDOTES,

AND

CHARACTERS, &c.

THE title of memoirs, though of all the methods of writing the eaſieſt, appears to me, however, rather too ſtrong an expreſſion for the few anecdotes I have to deliver; and for the manner in which I ſhall take the liberty of relating them. I write theſe memorandums without order, connection, or exactneſs; and without any other deſign than merely to amuſe a

few friends, or at leaſt afford them a proof of my complaiſance. They ſuppoſe me to be acquainted with the particulars of a court with which I have ever been intimately connected; and as they ſolicited me to commit the articles of my recollection to paper, I obey. Convinced of their fidelity and friendſhip, I am not afraid of their expoſing my inſufficiency to the reſt of the world, and ſhall therefore venture to ſubmit myſelf to their private criticiſm.

I ſhall commence theſe remembrances with ſome account of Madame de Maintenon, whoſe wit, whoſe merit, and whoſe kindneſs to me have imprinted my memory with unfading traces. Yet neither the prejudices of education, nor the incitements of gratitude ſhall, however,

ever, tempt me to deliver any thing on her ſubject contrary to the ſtricteſt veracity.

Madame de Maintenon was granddaughter to Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, who had been brought up with Henry the Fourth, at the court of Jane d'Albret, queen of Navarre. He had diſtinguiſhed himſelf both by his writings and his zeal for the reformed religion; but was further remarkable for that ſincerity with which he ſpeaks of himſelf in a manuſcript I have ſeen of his, where he ſays, *that the rough candor of his manners had rendered him unfit for the ſociety of the great.*

He had the honour to ſerve under Henry the Fourth, in all his campaigns;

but after the converſion of that prince he retired to his own eſtate at Murſay, near Niort, in Poictu. He gives a deſcription of it in his Baron de Fœneſte, and ſpeaks of himſelf in the ſame piece under the character of Æneas.

The zeal of Agrippa d'Aubigné for his religion, with his affection for the king at the ſame time, prompted him (after the aſſaſſination by du Châtel) to ſpeak in a manner that did him great honour among the Huguenots. *You denied Chriſt* (ſaid he to Henry the Fourth) *only with your lips, and you received a wound in your mouth; but, if you ſhould renounce him in your heart, a dagger may perhaps find the way there too.*

Monſieur d'Aubigné employed himſelf

ſelf in his retreat in writing the general Hiſtory of his own Times; and in the preface to that work, he makes an encomium upon Henry the Fourth that has always appeared to me ſo peculiar to him, and ſo well in itſelf, that I cannot help repeating it here. He ſtiled him the conqueror of *his own*—[alluding to his having been obliged to vindicate his rights by the ſword.] A panegyric that comprehended (I think) in two words, the juſtice of his cauſe, with the glory of all other heroes.

Monſieur d'Aubigné (whom I am now ſpeaking of) married Suſanna de Lezay, of the houſe of Luzignan, by whom he had a ſon and two daughters, the eldeſt of which was married to Monſieur de Caumont Daddé; and the younger to

Monſieur de Villette, who was my grandfather. The ſon was unhappy through life, but merited his misfortunes by his own ill conduct.

When he was a priſoner in the Chateau Trompette of Bourdeaux *, he eſpouſed Jane de Cardillac, daughter to Peter de Cardillac, lieutenant to the duke of Epernon, and deputy to him in that government. She never quitted him in all his diſtreſſes; and was delivered in the Marſhalſea of Niort, of Frances d' Aubigné, afterwards Madame Scarron, and ſince Madame de Maintenon.

I remember to have heard, that when Madame d'Aubigné went up to Paris

* He had been accuſed of having counterfeited the current ſpecie.

to

to ſolicit cardinal Richelieu for her huſband's pardon, the miniſter ſaid (after he had complied) *It would have been much better for her, had I refuſed her requeſt.*

It is eaſy to believe, that a perſon who could be deſerving of ſuch a character, could not be well principled in religion: but one can hardly ſuppoſe the greateſt profligate to be capable of ſpeaking againſt it to his daughter, even when a child, that it might make the ſtronger impreſſion. And yet Madame de Maintenon has aſſured me, that taking her into his arms, he has often ſaid to her, *Is it poſſible that you (who have ſuch good ſenſe in other things) can yet give credit to all that is taught you in your catechiſm.*

The miſerable ſituation to which Monſieur d'Aubigné had reduced himſelf, obliged him to accept of ſome ſmall eſtabliſhment in America, procured for him by the kindneſs of his friends: thither he retired with his family—which conſiſted of a wife, two ſons, and this little girl, then about a year and half old, and who was ſo very ill on the voyage, that they were once near caſting her into the ſea, thinking her dead.

Monſieur d'Aubigné died at Martinico, after a ſecond voyage there; for I think I have heard that he ſailed twice to the Weſt-Indies. No matter*—but Madame d'Aubigné returned to France a widow, with her children. She found

* Others ſay he died after his ſecond voyage at Orange, or on his journey. *No matter*—I ſay too.

their

their little effects ſwallowed up by creditors, and the diſhoneſty of ſome of her huſband's relations.

My grandmother, who was ſiſter to the deceaſed, and a perſon of worth, ſupported this diſtreſſed family, and took particular care of the little Fançhon, whom ſhe begged intirely from her mother, and educated as her own child. But ſhe and my grandfather being both of them Huguenots, Madame de Neüillant, mother to Madame de Navailles, and couſen to the late Monſieur d'Aubigné, obtained from the queen mother an order to wreſt the girl out of their hands.

Madame de Neüillant meant by ſuch officiouſneſs to pay her court to the queen; but the narrowneſs of her ſpirit

ſoon

ſoon brought her to repent the having encumbered herſelf with the expence of a dowerleſs charge, and ſhe endeavoured therefore to rid herſelf of it as faſt as ſhe could; with this deſign ſhe carried her to Paris, and placed her in a convent there, where ſhe was forced to turn catholic, after a reſiſtance remarkable for ſo young a perſon, not being then fourteen years of age.

Speaking of her converſion, I remember to have heard Madame de Maintenon ſay, that after ſhe had been perſuaded into a belief of the principle articles of our church, ſhe refuſed ſtill her acquieſcence in the other requiſites, except on condition that they would not inſiſt on her believing that her dear aunt (who was then dead, and whom ſhe

ſhe knew to have lived in her own faith like a ſaint) was damned.

After Madame de Neüillant had rendered Mademoiſelle d'Aubigné a perfect catholic, ſhe married her to the firſt man that preſented himſelf, who happened to be Monſieur Scarron, a perſon already ſufficiently known by his writings, to ſave me the trouble of any farther account or character of him, here.

Behold then Frances d'Aubigné, at the tender age of fourteen, hazarded under the roof of a man of Scarron's perſonal figure, and character, and aſſociated with all the young and gay libertines that the freedom of his converſation and manners uſed to collect together at his houſe.

It was, notwithſtanding, in ſuch a ſituation, and under ſuch circumſtances, that this very young woman, by the reſerve and decorum of her conduct, ſoon inſpired every one with ſo much reſpect towards her; that none dared preſume to ſport even the leaſt manner of double entendre before her, which polite awe extended itſelf ſo far, that it made one of that profligate coterie declare, *If he was any way reduced to the neceſſity of uſing an arch equivoque before the queen, or Madame Scarron, he ſhould not heſitate a moment to treſpaſs ſooner on the former.*

She uſed to eat an herring at the head of her table during lent, and retire immediately after to her own apartment; for ſhe very juſtly apprehended, that in the

the circumſtances both of her age and ſituation, a demeanour leſs ſtrict and preciſe might have taken off from the reſtraint ſhe would willingly impoſe on the freedom of ſuch gueſts, and have induced, perhaps, ſome imputation on her character.

It was not from herſelf only, that I have received theſe particulars; I have heard them alſo from my father, from the Marquis de Beuvron, and from many others who uſed frequently to be of the parties at Monſieur Scarron's, in her time. I remember alſo to have heard it taken notice of, that being once obliged to wait on Monſieur Fouquet, upon ſome occaſion of buſineſs or other, ſhe affected to appear there ſo negligently dreſſed, that her friends were aſhamed

to

to accompany her thither. The character of that minister, his passion for women, and the high ranks of life he was said to have intrigued in, are all sufficiently known already.

Such a circumspect conduct, with the just admiration it had inspired the world with, came at length to the knowledge of the queen: the Baron de la Garde first mentioned it to her majesty, and on the death of Monsieur Scarron procured for her from that princess, who was affected at the virtue and misfortune of a young woman of condition reduced to indigence, a pension of two thousand livres a year, with which the widow Scarron retired to the convent of Hospitallers, in the suburbs of St. Marceau.

With

With this pittance, ſhe however contrived always to make a neat and decent appearance—her cloaths were of the cheapeſt ſtuffs, with plain linen; but her ſhoes, ſtockings, and under petticoats were of a ſuperior kind. Her income ſufficiently provided her with ſuch apparel, paid her board, maintained her maid ſervant in the convent, and yielded even ſome overplus to ſpare to charity. She has often confeſſed ſince, that ſhe never was ſo happy in her life, and ſaid, that ſhe could not conceive why ſuch a ſituation ſhould ever have been ſtiled *a Vale of Tears.*

The Mareſchal d'Albret, whom ſhe had become acquainted with during the life of Monſieur Scarron, cultivated an intimacy between her and his wife; which

which was a further proof of the virtue acknowledged in Madame Scarron. For the huſbands of thoſe times, however libertine they might be in themſelves, were ſtill nice about the characters of thoſe women they ſuffered their wives to aſſociate with.

Madame d'Albret was a perſon of merit, though with a mean underſtanding. However, Madame de Maintenon, whoſe good ſenſe was ever attentive, thought prudently, that at her hazardous time of life it was much ſafer to paſs dull days in ſuch company, than to ſpend them more cheerfully with women of a livelier caſt of character.

Madame d'Albret conceived ſoon ſo warm a friendſhip for her, that ſhe often

moſt

moſt earneſtly ſolicited her to take up her reſidence intirely in her family; but this ſhe declined, though ſhe uſed frequently to dine at her houſe, and ſometimes ſtaid there all night at her requeſt.

Madame Scarron ſtrengthened this affection by an intire complacency, and conſtant attention to her in every thing, which was an indulgence that the good lady had never been much accuſtomed to. When they frequented the theatre together, this poor weak woman (who was generally ignorant of every thing ſhe ſaw repreſented) uſed to oblige Madame Scarron to ſit cloſe by her, all the while, to explain what was paſſing juſt before her eyes, and ſo interrupt the attention ſhe was inclined to give to the neweſt, or moſt intereſting performances.

This ſame Madame d'Albret, notwithſtanding her devotion, and other good qualities, was charged with the indecency of loving liquor rather too much—[better than herſelf, it ſeems. The ſad addiction of the weak or wretched! increaſing ſtill the evils it is meant to cure—adding ſhame to miſery, and vice to folly] an exceſs of this kind was the more remarkable in thoſe days, when women ſeldom drank any thing but water, or at moſt, juſt purpled with wine.

I remember to have heard a ſtory once upon this habit of the perſon I am ſpeaking of, that upon looking in the glaſs one day, and obſerving ſome redneſs on her noſe, *Where did I get this?* ſaid ſhe to herſelf; to which Monſieur de

de Matha de Bourdeille, who was juſt behind her, replied, in a ſort of half whiſper, *At the buffet.*

This Monſieur Matha was a perſon of a peculiar natural wit, and reckoned one of the beſt companions in the world. It was he who ſeeing Madame d'Albret in ſuch heavy affliction, on the death of her brother, that ſhe abſtained, for a conſiderable time, from all kind of nouriſhment, ſaid to her, *If you are reſolved, madam, never to eat a morſel more, during life, your behaviour, at preſent, is perfectly conſiſtent; but if you deſign ever to take a bit again, believe me that this is the beſt time you can poſſibly do ſo in.* This argument had its effect, and ſhe immediately ſat down to table, and eat heartily.

He was remarkable for going thinly clad, in all ſeaſons, and ſomebody aſked him once, *how he did* to wear ſuch light cloaths, in winter? to which he replied, *why, I freeze with cold.*

The Mareſchal d'Albret had two relations who lived with his wife; Mademoiſelle de Pons and Mademoiſelle de Martel; both very agreeable, but of different characters. Theſe Girls had no ſort of affection for each other, and but ſeldom concurred in any thing, except in the attachment that united them both equally to Madame de Maintenon.

Madame de Monteſpan, who was alſo nearly related to the Mareſchal d'Albret, uſed frequently to viſit at his houſe, and it was there that the intimacy between Madame de Mainte-

non and her firſt commenced. They ſoon conceived a mutual affection for one another, and declared a juſt ſenſe of each other's merits.

Madame de Maintenon was alſo a welcome gueſt at the Hotel de Richelieu; equally, indeed, deſired and well received, every where. But I ſhall reſerve what I have to ſay of Madame de Richelieu, for ſome other place.

It was, I think, pretty much about this time, that the princeſs of Nemours became queen of Portugal. The friends of Madame de Maintenon ſpoke of her ſo advantageouſly to her majeſty, that ſhe conceived a ſtrong deſire to take her into her train, and had the offer made to her.

This opportunity appeared to be extremely favourable towards her happy eſtabliſhment in life—But it was an irkſome thing to become an exile from one's country, and to quit at once a ſituation which had its pleaſures and ſatisfactions. She heſitated in her reſolution about this matter, for ſome time, and ſuffered extremely during the ſtruggle, which the reaſons *pro* and *con* had excited in her mind. But, at length, her deſtiny prevailed, and ſhe declined the proffered matronage of her majeſty.

The princeſs des Urſins, then Madame de Chalais, was a viſitor alſo, at the hôtel d'Albret; and I have ſince often heard her, in converſation with Madame de Maintenon, confeſs that ſhe

ſhe had frequently felt extremely mortified at finding the Mareſchal d'Albret, and others of the nobility, then in the ſecret of affairs, conferring ſeriouſly with Madame de Maintenon, upon matters of ſtate, while they uſed to leave her to amuſe herſelf among the other gay and young of the company, as if thought unfit, or unworthy to be admitted into ſuch political confidence, or conſultations.

Madame de Maintenon, in return, confeſſed to her, with equal ingenuouſneſs, that ſhe had often been as much tired, as Madame des Urſins had been envious, of theſe cabinet councils, and as frequently wiſhed that thoſe perſons had not conceived ſo highly of her ſenſe and judgment, as to deprive her

the liberty of entertaining herſelf more agreeably, than in liſtening to the plans of ſtateſmen, or the diſcontents of courtiers.

This ſpecimen is ſufficient to point out the difference between the characters of two women, who have ſince been diſtinguiſhed in ſuch high ſcenes of life. It is certain that Madame de Maintenon was not naturally framed for buſineſs; ſhe deteſted all court intrigue, from the uprightneſs of her heart, and was formed for the pleaſures of ſociety, by the charms of her converſation and manners.

But before I enter into any detail of thoſe conſequences which flowed from the accidental commencement of the intimacy between Madame de Monteſpan,

teſpan, and her, I ſhall beg leave firſt to ſpeak a word or two of my own family; and of myſelf, in particular.

Peace having been concluded, the king, full of glory and leiſure, wanted nothing to complete his felicity, but the extirpation of an hereſy, that had occaſioned conſiderable diſturbances in his kingdom. Such a deſign was certainly great, noble, and politic, if conſidered independent of the methods made uſe of to bring it to bear.

The miniſtry, and many of the biſhops, in order to pay their court, contributed greatly toward thoſe means, not only by perſuading his majeſty to make uſe of ſome, which were not agreeable to his own turn of mind,

but

but by deceiving him in the execution of others, which he had appointed himſelf.

But to be more particular and explicit, I ſhould have acquainted you that Monſieur de Louvois, ſeeing the peace confirmed, was afraid of giving the other miniſters, eſpecially Monſieur Colbert, and Monſieur de Seignelay, his ſon, too great an advantage over him, and therefore reſolved, at all hazard whatſoever, to employ the troops, upon this occaſion, and make uſe of *church militant* arguments, in a buſineſs where charity and moderation ſhould have been the only weapons.

The clergy moſt ſhamefully concurred in this church diſcipline, and wreſting

wreſting the text of ſcripture, *compel them to come in*, to their own violent ſenſe of conviction, maintained publicly that it was the will of God to have force made uſe of, where perſuaſion was found to be inſufficient. For that though ſincere converts might not be made, for the preſent, yet the children of ſuch conformiſts would certainly be good catholicks, hereafter.

Monſieur de Louvois firſt prevailed on the king to ſtation ſome regiments of dragoons in the moſt remarkable Huguenot towns, by perſuading him that the ſole appearance of the troops, without any other manœuvre than merely capreoling before the inhabitants, would induce them more readily to liſten to the doctrine of ſuch orthodox

thodox teachers as might at the ſame time be ſent among them.

The king complied with this miniſterial meaſure, againſt his own opinion, and contrary to his natural bent, which always inclined to lenity. They took advantage of his permiſſion, and under the ſanction of his orders, were guilty of much cruelty, without his knowledge; which he would have puniſhed ſeverely, had the report of it ever been ſuffered to have reached his ears. But Monſieur de Louvois contrived to amuſe him, from time to time, by affirming that numbers of converts were every day made, as he had before ſuppoſed would have been the caſe, at the mere ſight of the military on the parades.

His

His majeſty had really ſo much candour, in his own nature, that he could never imagine any perſon to be capable of deceiving him, whom he had once placed a confidence in; and many of the unwarrantable things which have been imputed to him, in theſe and other tranſactions, were owing to the miſtaken notion of probity that he uſed too often to compliment his miniſters with. [Liſten, O ye kings!]

Theſe prieſtly perſecutions, or military converſions, however, did not take place, until after the revocation of the edict of Nantz; for before that time the king did every thing in his power to gain the chiefs of the Huguenot ſect by fair and gentle means, and had publicly declared, that for the future none ſhould

ſhould be employed by him, in any office, civil or military, by ſea or land, except true catholics.

Madame de Maintenon took the ſame pains, in her own family; but as ſhe could not prevail on my father by the hopes of preferment, nor convince him by dint of argument, ſhe concerted a ſcheme with Monſieur de Seignelay, to have him ſent away upon a diſtant command in the navy, in order to ſeparate him from his children.

I had two brothers, who, though very young, had made ſeveral campaigns. The eldeſt before he was nine years of age, had been preſent in the action at Meſſina, where admiral Ruyter

was killed, and had received a wound there. The ſingularity of the circumſtance, and the ſpirit with which the boy had behaved, upon that occaſion, procured him a commiſſion the next day.

After that campaign my father returned to court, and brought this ſon with him. The ſervice he had ſeen, with a very pretty figure, made him be taken notice of by the whole court, and particularly by Madame de Monteſpan. If my father would have left him there, and ſuffered him to have become a catholic, it had been a conſiderable advantage to both their fortunes: but he reſiſted every overture that was made him upon this ſubject, and immediately

ately withdrew both himſelf and his ſon from court.

It was then that Madame de Maintenon found that ſhe had no other way to compaſs her deſign, than to have him ſent abroad, as I mentioned before, and to get his ſon to ſerve under Monſieur de Chateaurenault, leaving him only the youngeſt, who was then entered into the marine.

Juſt after my father had ſailed from France, one of his ſiſters, whom my mother had been to pay a viſit to, at Niort, begged of her to leave me with her, only till the next day, which ſhe conſented to. For though ſhe was herſelf a catholic, ſhe was not let into the deſign againſt me; as they thought it

prudent

prudent to keep her clear of the plot, on account of my father.

But my mother had hardly turned her back upon Niort, when my aunt, who had been uſed to change her religion, and who was then a convert to popery, for the ſecond, or third time, carried me off with her, directly to Paris. On the road we overtook Monſieur de St. Hermine, with one of his ſiſters, and Mademoiſelle de Caumont, who were as much ſurprized, as concerned, to ſee me in ſuch hands, and we all travelled to Paris together.

As for my own part, I was perfectly well ſatisfied to go any where, without troubling myſelf to aſk why, or where they were carrying me; and the other

perſons I have juſt mentioned, being young people grown up, that Madame de Maintenon had aſked from their parents, it was agreed on in the council of Huguenots, that it would be an unreaſonable thing to refuſe her requeſt, as all ſhe pretended to deſire was the pleaſure of ſeeing and converſing with them, promiſing never to urge them in the leaſt upon the ſubject of religion. And what made them the more readily give their conſent, was the opinion they had conceived of theſe young people's being moſt thoroughly grounded in the principles of their faith. And in reality the ſteadineſs of theſe uncommon catechumens did infinite honour to Calviniſm.

When we arrived at Paris, Madame de Maintenon immediately ſought me out,

court, and conducted me alone to St. Germain's. I wept bitterly, at first, but, the next day, I thought the king's mass so very fine, I consented to become a catholic, on condition that I might hear it every day, and that I was also to be free from the cat-and-nine-tail discipline. This was really all the controversy they employed, and this the only abjuration I made.

Monsieur de Chateaurenault had orders to send my brother to court, and he arrived there almost as soon as I, but made a much greater resistance, though he recanted, at last. They took him out of the Navy, and placed him at an academy. My father, surprized and afflicted at such proceedings, on his return from the voyage wrote letters

to Madame de Maintenon full of bitterneſs and reproach, accuſing her of ingratitude towards his mother, who was her aunt, and of cruelty and injuſtice with regard to him. But as ſhe was ſupported by the king's authority, he was forced to ſubmit to power upon the ſlight promiſe of not compelling his children to profeſs the catholic faith, if they ſhould not be willing to embrace it.

However, ſhe effectually converted both my brothers, and after they had gone through their exerciſes at the academy, and ſerved the uſual time in the corps of muſqueteers, a commiſſion of cornet of light horſe was given to the eldeſt, which he afterwards ſold, on the recommencement of the war, to purchaſe

chaſe the regiment of Dauphin cavalry *; and to the youngeſt, the regiment of the queen's dragoons, at the head of which, he was killed in the action of Steinkerck.

As for me, I was educated with a care and attention, which did Madame de Maintenon great honour. My time was portioned out between my maſters, reading, and proper amuſements. My memory was exerciſed by learning ſelect pieces of poetry by heart; and the habit I was uſed to of giving an account of the books I read, and of the ſermons I heard, ſerved to fix my attention to the chain of facts, or the diſpoſition of argument.

* I ſhall leave it to thoſe who are verſed in the French military to compute how the ſale of a cornet's commiſſion could be able to purchaſe a regiment.

Beſides theſe taſks, I was obliged every morning to write a letter to ſome one of my own family, or to any other perſon I ſhould chooſe, which I carried every evening to Madame de Maintenon, who commended or amended them according to their merits or faults.

And as I grew up, there paſſed nothing at court which ſhe did not require my obſervations and reflections upon, as far as my underſtanding was capable of; approving my ſentiments when they appeared to be juſt, and correcting them when ſhe thought I judged amiſs. In reality, ſhe never neglected the ſmalleſt matter that ſhe thought might be conducive towards the forming my judgment, or cultivating my underſtanding.

I have not entered into all this detail from any incitement of vanity, but ſolely

to

to mark by facts, much ſtronger than eulogiums, the character and conduct of Madame de Maintenon. And it is impoſſible (in my opinion) to reflect upon the poſt ſhe occupied, and the little leiſure ſhe could be ſuppoſed to be able to have borrowed from it, without admiring the kind and generous attention ſhe beſtowed upon a girl, whom, after all, ſhe need not have encumbered herſelf with the charge of, but merely from her own benevolence and good-nature.

My father, after having withſtood not only the kindneſs, but the promiſes of the king; and ſuffering the rank of admiral to paſs by him without regret, after having reſiſted the eloquence of Monſieur de Meaux, for whom he

had a ſort of natural affection, returned again to his command at ſea, and during that campaign happened to make ſome reflections upon the ſubject of religion, which had never occurred to him before.

The text of the *Tares and the Wheat* appeared to him to pronounce peremptorily againſt ſchiſm, and he concluded that it could not be lawful for men to ſeparate from the church: thus convinced, but without taking any advantage from it toward the advancement of his fortune, he made a public recantation on his return before the curate of his own pariſh, and miſſed by that means the emolument of thoſe temporal rewards which he might have inſured, had he been ſo diſingenuous as to have made

made a merit of his converſion at court.

Nay, ſo far did he carry his chaſtity in this particular, that appearing afterwards in the circle, and the king ſpeaking to him with his uſual kindneſs upon his reconcilement to the church, he coldly replied, *That this was the only occaſion in life where he had not his majeſty's approbation in ſome ſort of contemplation.*

I was brought to St. Germain's, in the month of January, 1681, the queen was then alive; Monſieur le Dauphin had been married about a year; and Madame de Maintenon was in public favour at court, and equally well received by the queen as by the king—

that

that princeſs imputed to the new favourite the kindneſs of the king's behaviour to her, for ſome time before, and regarded her, therefore, in a very different light from thoſe women he had been uſually attached to.

But before I ſpeak of things I have ſeen, it may be proper to mention thoſe I have heard; firſt: I might have ſeen Madame de Fontanges, but I either never did, or have forgot it; I only remember, at St. Germain's, to have taken notice of the king's paſſing for ſome time from the old caſtle to the new one, where her apartments then were, to viſit her every evening. It was ſaid that ſhe was in an ill ſtate of health then, and indeed, ſhe retired a few months after, to Port-Royal, at Paris, where ſhe died.

Some ſcandal had been whiſpered on her death to the diſadvantage of Madame de Monteſpan, which I am convinced was falſe; and do really believe, from what I have heard Madame de Maintenon ſay upon this ſubject, that Madame de Fontanges loſt her life by venturing to leave Fontainebleau, once, the ſame day that the king did, though the pains of labour were upon her at the time—it is certain ſhe languiſhed ever after this indiſcretion, and died at length very little regretted.

Madame de Monteſpan need not have apprehended the permanency of Madame de Fontanges influence, for ſhe might have been ſure of the king's return to her, if no greater obſtacle lay in her way—her character more ambitious than

than fond, had made her often look with indifference upon the infidelities of the king; and as ſhe ſometimes acted from caprice, ſhe had herſelf contributed to ſtrengthen the firſt notice he took of the charms of Madame de Fontanges. I have heard it affirmed that ſhe uſed frequently to invite her of her parties, and take all the pains ſhe could to ſet her beauty off to the beſt advantage before him; ſhe happened to ſucceed, and then repented of it. But death ſoon delivered her from a rival equally formidable in her perſon, as contemptible in her underſtanding.

Madame de Fontanges, to her ſmall portion of ſenſe had joined a good deal of romance in her notions of perſons and things, which a provincial education, with

with the vanity of her beauty, had inſpired her with. The king was fond of her perſon, but appeared ever to be uneaſy whenever ſhe opened her lips before any third perſon.

From this character of her, it is plain that her reign would have been but ſhort, though her life had been ever ſo long. Beauty ſoon grows familiar, but a diſguſt at folly increaſes: ſuch an abſurd ſpecies of it, eſpecially (as I have juſt hinted at) when it expoſes itſelf before perſons of the turn and ſpirit of Madame de Monteſpan, whom the ſlighteſt article of ridicule could not eſcape, and who had the art of marking it to others by a certain manner that the Mortemer family were diſtinguiſhed for.

However,

However, Madame de Fontanges was ſenſible of an unfeigned paſſion for the king; and replied one day to Madame de Maintenon, who was exhorting her to get rid of an attachment which could only render her unhappy, *You adviſe me* (ſaid ſhe) *to lay aſide my affections, with the ſame kind of ſang froid that you would deſire me to throw off a wrapping gown.*

I remember alſo, to have often heard Madame de la Valiere mentioned, who preceded Madame de Monteſpan. But as I do not mean to give the hiſtory of all the king's miſtreſſes, I ſhall only relate thoſe articles which have made the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on my memory, either from my own particular knowledge, or the accounts I had received of them from Madame de Maintenon.

The

The king happened to conceive a paſſion for Madame de Monteſpan at the time he lived publickly with Madame de la Valiere; and Madame de Monteſpan had ſo little delicacy in her, as to ſubmit to become her inmate, at the ſame table, and almoſt in the ſame houſe. She might have complied with ſuch an arrangement at firſt, with a view of concealing her amour from her huſband and the public, or perhaps a regard to decorum was not among her punctilios; or poſſibly her vanity being greater than her paſſion, the triumph ſhe enjoyed from ſeeing the humiliation of her rival, might have been ſuperior to the jealouſy of her charms—which ever of theſe was the caſe, the fact itſelf is certain.

However,

However, one day being out of humour with the king (which often happened) and though the matter was quite foreign to this ſubject, yet ſhe took it into her head to complain of this living in common, with a reſentment that ſhe felt not, and charged the king, which, in truth, well ſhe might, with great want of delicacy himſelf in this particular. He to appeaſe her, replied with his uſual tenderneſs and mildneſs, concluding with ſaying, that this intercourſe had grown into habit inſenſibly —*Inſenſibly perhaps to you, ſir*, anſwered ſhe, *but too ſenſibly for me.*

The ſingular rôle performed by Madame de la Valiere, for above two years before her retiring from court, deſerves to be taken notice of here—It was generally

nerally known, and frequently ſpoken of, but as it might be among the number of thoſe things that are not recorded, and therefore may be forgotten, I ſhall afford it a place here among theſe memorandums.

Madame de la Valiere was naturally tender, but virtuous. She loved the king, but not his royalty; his paſſion ceaſed for her when it commenced for Madame de Monteſpan. If on the firſt alarm of this event, at leaſt, after ſhe had had certain conviction of this new attachment, ſhe had retired into a convent, ſuch a retreat had been more natural and conformable to her character and diſpoſition. But ſhe acted differently; ſhe not only remained at court, but condeſcended even to become one in the train of her rival.

Madame de Monteſpan made a baſe and ungenerous uſe of her advantage, affecting to have her conſtantly attendant on her, commending her handineſs, and declaring that ſhe never thought herſelf completely dreſſed till Madame de la Valiere had perfected her attire. While the poor ſpirited Valiere, on her part, manifeſted all the ſedulity and obſervances of a common waiting-maid, whoſe fortunes depended on the ſervile offices ſhe might render her miſtreſs.

How many mortifications, diſguſts, and humiliations muſt the unhappy la Valiere have ſuſtained, during thoſe two years penance that ſhe condeſcended to undergo in ſo mean a ſituation at court! At length ſhe took her public leave of

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the king, who bad her farewel, without the leaſt emotion, when ſhe went to profeſs herſelf among the Carmelites, where ſhe lived and died in a manner truly edifying and affecting.

She ſaid to Madame de Maintenon, after ſhe had formed her reſolution of retiring, *When I am ſuffering under the ſeverities of the order I am going to enter into, it will be ſome relief to my mind to remember what thoſe perſons* (alluding to the king and Monteſpan) *have ſo often made me endure.*

Such a reflection as this ſufficiently proves that her patience and ſubmiſſion, during her acquieſcence in ſuch an humble ſtate, was not owing to her want of ſenſibility, but rather to a fond, but un-

philoſophic hope of regaining thus the loſt affections of her fickle lover.

It is certain that the ſtile of a convent was better ſuited to the diſpoſition of la Valiere, than that of a court, as ſhe ſeemed ever to have had a ſtrong bias toward devotion. I have ſeen her in the latter years of her life, and have heard her with an energy of voice that reached the heart, ſay admirable things on her preſent ſtation, and of the happineſs ſhe enjoyed in it, notwithſtanding all the harſhneſs of her diſcipline.

I have been told that when the late biſhop of Meaux, Monſieur Boſſuet, acquainted her with the death of the Count de Vermandois, her ſon, ſhe, from a natural emotion, wept a good deal,

deal, at firſt, but recollecting herſelf ſuddenly, ſaid to the prelate, *It is too much to mourn the death of a child, whoſe birth I have not yet ceaſed to lament.*

I have alſo ſeen Madame de Monteſpan, ſeveral years after la Valiere had taken the veil, and after ſhe had herſelf retired from the court, frequent the Carmelite convent to viſit and commune with the fair penitent, become then for her a proper guide and pattern.

But my memorandums call me back again to the court, where Madame de Maintenon (as I hinted before) appeared in a moſt diſtinguiſhed ſituation, both with regard to the king and the queen. She had been appointed attire woman to the Dauphineſs de Baviere; and the king

had purchaſed for her the lands of Maintenon, in 1674 or 75, and appointed her to take the name of them, as ſhe mentions herſelf in a letter to Monſieur d'Aubigné, her brother.

But the commencement of Madame de Maintenon's fortune has ſo much connection with the hiſtory of Madame de Monteſpan, that I cannot ſpeak of one without introducing the other. It is therefore neceſſary to repeat the occaſion of their firſt acquaintance with each other, before I proceed to relate the conſequences of it.

Madame de Maintenon has often told me that when ſhe knew Madame de Monteſpan, at the Mareſchal d'Albret's, ſhe then betrayed none of thoſe tem-

pers

pers and diſpoſitions which ſhe had ſince manifeſted to the world; affirming, that during that interval her ſentiments were chaſte, her manners prudent, and her reputation unblemiſhed.

She became ſoon after, by the favour of *Monſieur* *, a lady of the bedchamber to the queen. The king ſeemed to take but little notice of her beauty, at firſt; and all her attention was beſtowed on her miſtreſs, whom ſhe uſed to entertain while ſhe ſat up in her private apartment, which generally uſed to be late, as ſhe never went to bed till the king came into her chamber.

This princeſs was ſo very virtuous that ſhe believed all women to be as

* The title of the king of France's brother.

chaſte as herſelf; and to ſhew how far her innocence, and at the ſame time her pride of ſentiment, extended, it will be ſufficient here, to mention the anſwer ſhe made to a Carmelite Abbeſs, whom ſhe had called in to aſſiſt her once toward entering into a thorough examination of her conſcience, previous to a general confeſſion ſhe was preparing herſelf for. The ſuperior aſked her, if in Spain, before ſhe was married, ſhe had ever happened to conceive a particular liking to any of the young nobles in her father's court? O, *no, mother*, ſhe replied, *there were no kings among them.*

At length Madame de Monteſpan happened to attract the affections of the king, and upon being in a ſituation to have children by him, it was agreed upon

upon between them to place this nurſery under the care of ſome perſon or other who might be ſufficiently qualified, not only to rear, but to conceal them. She ſoon determined on Madame de Maintenon, as one who was every way capable, both of the truſt and the charge.

She made her the propoſal, to which Madame de Maintenon replied, that ſhe would not take upon her the care of Madame de Monteſpan's children, but that if the king ſhould command her to aſſume the charge of his, ſhe would not heſitate to obey him. The king then made her the requeſt, and ſhe readily complied.

If this event was, for Madame de Maintenon, the commencement of a ſingu-

ſingular fortune, it was likewiſe the beginning of her trouble and conſtraint. She muſt eſtrange herſelf from all her friends, renounce the pleaſures of ſociety, for which ſhe was naturally formed, and all this without being at liberty to give ſufficient reaſons for it to the world. [In fine, ſhe need not have done more, had the intrigue been her own.]

However, as it might have raiſed ſome alarm, if ſhe had ſequeſtered herſelf on a ſudden, in order to obviate the hazards which might have occurred in ſo ſmall a houſe as hers, where it would have been eaſy to have ſurprized a nurſe, or hear the ſquall of an infant; ſhe contrived to ſcreen theſe appearances by taking the little Heudicourt home to her,

her, whom ſhe begged from her mother, for that purpoſe. Madame d'Heudicourt granted her requeſt, on account of the friendſhip which had long ſubſiſted between them, and the vaſt fondneſs ſhe always knew Madame de Maintenon to have been remarkable for toward children. This little girl was afterwards married to Monſieur de Montgon, and became ſince a lady of the bedchamber to the Dauphineſs de Savoy.

I recollect to have heard many particulars of thoſe times mentioned by Madame de Maintenon and others, which, however, I do not think worth repeating here, though I confeſs that the accounts of them have often entertained me. I ſhall relate only one of theſe articles, here.

When

When Madame de Monteſpan was ſeized with her firſt labour, Madame de Maintenon was immediately ſent for. She carried away the child tied under her ſcarf, and concealing herſelf in a maſk, drove off in a common *fiacre*, or hackney coach, to her own houſe, in Paris. What fear muſt ſhe have been in all the while, leſt the child ſhould happen to ſquall! which apprehenſions were afterwards often renewed, as Madame de Monteſpan had ſeven children by the king.

But I have heard it ſaid, ſhe grieved ſo much on account of the firſt, that it had conſiderably impaired her beauty: ſhe grew lean, ſallow, and became in a ſhort time ſo intirely altered throughout her whole appearance, that one could hardly

hardly have known her again for the ſame perſon. Far from being born a profligate, the character of Madame de Monteſpan (as I have before ſaid) was naturally chaſte and virtuous. Her only ſcheme, on the commencement of this amour, was to attach the king to her by the livelineſs of her wit and converſation. She flattered herſelf that ſhe ſhould ſtill remain miſtreſs both of his paſſion and of her own. She imagined ſhe ſhould have been able to keep him ever ſoliciting thoſe favours which ſhe was reſolved never to grant.

But the event was more natural. She grew diſtracted (as I ſaid) on her firſt pregnancy, conſoled herſelf on the ſecond, and carried her effrontery, on all the reſt, to the moſt ſhameful exceſs.

How-

However, the ſame farce was ſtill carried on, of concealing the offspring which ſhe appeared publickly with child of.

It happened once, that the chimney took fire, in the apartment where theſe infants lay. Madame de Maintenon having taken all poſſible precautions to ſtifle it, without ſuffering any but her own immediate family to aſſiſt her; but fearing leſt it might prove ſo ſtrong as to oblige her to call the neighbours in to lend their aid, ſent off an expreſs to St. Germain's, with a private billet to aſk Madame de Monteſpan how ſhe ſhould conduct herſelf in a caſe which might poſſibly hazard the diſcovery of her concealed charge? to which ſhe returned no other anſwer, but by ſaying to the meſ-

ſenger,

lenger, *I am glad of it—tell Madame Scarron, that I look upon it to be a lucky omen for the children.*

The eldeſt of them died about three months old; and Madame de Maintenon felt a mother's concern for it, much more than the real one did; upon which the king (ſpeaking of Madame de Maintenon) ſaid, that *ſhe had ſuch a ſuſceptibility in her nature, that it muſt be a very pleaſant thing to be loved by her.*

Madame de Monteſpan had five children by the king, without interruption —I forget whether they were acknowledged ſeparately at court, or all together. But I know that for want of a precedent to legitimate them without naming the mother, Lewis contrived to frame

frame one for himſelf, by legitimating the Count de St. Pol, ſon to Madame de Longueville, by the Mareſchal de Ferté, during the life of her huſband, and without mentioning her name.

The king afterwards acknowledged his own, in the ſame manner, by the titles of the duke du Maine, the Count de Vexin, Mademoiſelle de Nantes, and Mademoiſelle de Tours—the eldeſt being dead before this event. The Count de Toulouſe and Mademoiſelle de Blois, ſince Ducheſs of Orleans, who were alſo his children by Madame de Monteſpan, were not then born.

Madame de Maintenon, upon that occaſion, was removed to court with theſe illegitimates under her care: ſhe

attached herſelf particularly to the Duke de Maine, whoſe ſenſe and apprehenſion ſeemed to open favourably. Happy, I may venture to pronounce, it had been for him, if the turn of Madame de Maintenon's fortunes had permitted his continuing for a longer time under her tuition, ſo as to have had his education finiſhed in the manner ſhe had begun it. She had, indeed, nothing to add to the ſweetneſs of his natural diſpoſition, but ſhe might have been able perhaps to have inſpired him with ſomewhat more of reſolution and ſpirit—I ſpeak not with regard to perſonal bravery, but a certain determination of mind; a quality extremely neceſſary to thoſe who happen to be placed in the more elevated ranks of life.

It muſt be confeſſed that the figure of the Duke de Maine, with his natural modeſty, and the particular affection that the king had taken for him, which confined him too much near his perſon, had contributed a good deal to ſeparate him from the commerce of the world; to whoſe enjoyments he would have greatly contributed, had he been more generally known. Baſhfulneſs is apt to render people unſociable, if they will not take the pains to correct it.

The marriage of the Duke de Maine completed the evils of his unfortunate diſpoſitions. He eſpouſed a princeſs of the blood, of a character quite the reverſe of his own—as quick and daring, as he was gentle and acquieſcent.

This

This princeſs treſpaſſing on the mildneſs of his nature, ſoon threw aſide the reſtraint which an education, perhaps too ſtrict, had impoſed upon her. She ſcorned to pay any manner of court to the king, but kept her own ſtate at Saulx: where by her extravagance ſhe ruined her huſband; who either approved, or at leaſt oppoſed not, her abſolute will and pleaſure.

The king ſpoke often to him upon this ſubject, but without being able to reform him; ſo that finding, at length, that his inſtances only ſerved to render a ſon he really loved but inwardly unhappy, he refrained from all farther remonſtrances, and left him a victim to his blindneſs and indiſcretion.

I remember, with regard to the marriage of the Duke de Maine, that the king, whoſe ſentiments were always juſt, did not chooſe to have legitimated princes marry. *Perſons, under ſuch circumſtances*, ſaid he once to Madame de Maintenon, *ought never to enter into ſuch a connection.* But the Duke de Maine being determined otherwiſe, in this point, the ſame policy of the king would have at leaſt had him choſe a wife from among ſome of the noble families of the kingdom, if it had not been for the oppoſition of Monſieur le Prince*, who looked upon all ſuch alliances as the property of his own houſe.

I know that the king had pitched upon Mademoiſelle d'Uzès, for the

* The Duke of Orleans, the king's brother, I ſuppoſe is here meant.

duke

duke, and that he was juſt upon the point of declaring her, when Monſieur de Barbézieux came to acquaint him of his marriage with her, which put a ſtop to that purpoſe. *All is conjuncture, in this life*, ſaid the Mareſchal de Clairambault, *and the fortune of Mademoiſelle d'Uzès is one inſtance of it.*

The Count de Vexin died young, having lived juſt long enough to ſhew by his infirmities, that death was a bleſſing to him. Madame de Monteſpan was not averſe either to medicines, or experiments, and I have heard it affirmed that ſhe had cauſed thirteen cauteries, or iſſues to be made in his back, at one time. He had been deſigned for the church, and was, juſt before he died, *between eight and nine years old*,

put into poſſeſſion of ſeveral conſider-able benefices; among which was the abby of St. Denis, the patronage of which has been ſince given to the royal foundation of St. Cyr.

Mademoiſelle de Tours, his ſiſter, died about the ſame age. The other, Mademoiſelle de Nantes, I ſhall have frequent occaſion to mention, in theſe notes. Nothing was neglected in her education that might conduce toward the embelliſhment of thoſe engaging talents ſhe had received from nature. Her improvements were reſponſible to the pains that were beſtowed on her. But her charms and graces were beyond my encomium.

Her perſon, however, was not with-out

out fault, nor her beauty perfect; neither was her underſtanding, in my opinion, any thing extraordinary. Yet be it as it may, ſhe poſſeſſed ſo much the power of pleaſing, that it was impoſible to find any thing deficient in her, until the diſcovery of her heart ſuffered one's reaſon to uſe its own liberty.

And what one would think might have rendered a detection in this particular, eaſy to have been made, was that ſhe never even pretended to be capable of the leaſt attachment of friendſhip. But the natural propenſity we all have to flatter ourſelves, with the many agreeable talents ſhe was miſtreſs of, would hardly ſuffer people to give credit even to her own declarations on

this ſubject, till after ſome perſonal experience, or other, which was ſeldom wanting, ſerved to convince them of her ingenuouſneſs.

After theſe five children, Madame de de Monteſpan was, for ſome time, without having any more; and it was during this interval that a ſeparation from her, and an accommodation between the king and queen, ſo honourable to the biſhop of Meaux, Madame de Montoſier, and other perſons of merit and virtue about the court, were brought about.

Theſe events happened in a time of Jubilée*. The king had always a ſtrong

* A ſeaſon of penitence and prayer, preparatory to a plenary indulgence from the pope.

ſenſe

ſenſe of religion, which would frequently manifeſt itſelf even in the midſt of his exceſſes of galantry—for this was his only foible. He had been born with an excellent underſtanding, and was ſo regular in his conduct that he never omitted hearing maſs, every day of his life, except twice, when he happened to be with the army. The great feſtivals uſed to excite his remorſe mo ɔ rticu larly; equally troubled not to pay his devotions, or to perform them unworthily.

Madame de Monteſpan had ſo far the ſame turn of mind, that it was by no means in compliance with the king that ſhe manifeſted it. She had been carefully educated by a mother of exemplary piety, who had ſown the ſeeds of

religion in her mind, ſo early, that they were never to be eradicated afterwards. This was ſo apparent in her, at all times, that even while ſhe held on her criminal intercourſe with the king, ſhe kept her lents ſo ſtrictly, that ſhe uſed to have her bread weighed out to her. The Ducheſs d'Uzés, aſtoniſhed at her ſcruples, could not avoid dropping a hint of her inconſiſtency, one day, before her: *And what, madam,* replied Madame de Monteſpan, *becauſe I happen to be guilty of one crime, muſt I be culpable of all the reſt.*

But to return to our jubilée. The two lovers admoniſhed by their conſciences, parted, with mutual conſent, and determined purpoſe, never to renew their commerce more. At leaſt

ſo

ſo they thought, at that time. Madame de Monteſpan retired to Paris, viſited the churches, faſted, prayed, and wept her tranſgreſſions. The king, alſo, on his part, performed likewiſe every duty of a good chriſtian.

The jubilée being over, it became a divided queſtion, whether Madame de Monteſpan ſhould return to court, any more. *Why not?* ſaid her relations and friends, even the moſt ſcrupulous of them. *She has a right to appear there, both from her birth, and her poſt; and ſurely ſhe may continue to be as good a chriſtian there, as any where elſe.* The biſhop of Meaux, too, was of the ſame opinion.

There remained, however, one difficulty

culty ſtill in the caſe. Madame de Monteſpan, ſaid they, ought not to appear again before the king, without ſome preparation on both ſides. It was thought proper that they ſhould meet together, at ſome third place, before hand, in order to prevent the ſudden effects of an unexpected interview.

Upon this conſideration it was ſettled that the king ſhould pay a viſit to Madame de Monteſpan, at her own apartments; but to leave no room for further ſcandal, it was agreed on that ſome ladies of the moſt reſpectable rank and unblemiſhed characters of the court, ſhould be preſent at this meeting, and that the king ſhould not ſee Madame de Monteſpan, except in their company.

This

This rendezvous being appointed, the king appeared there, at the time, and on the terms ſpecified. But they happened inſenſibly to withdraw together, to a window, whiſpered a good while, wept, and ſaid ſuch things to one another, as one may ſuppoſe to be natural in ſuch a ſituation; till at length they made a profound obeïſſance to theſe venerable matrons, and retired into an inward apartment. The Ducheſs of Orleans, and afterwards the Count de Toulouſe brought teſtimony into the world with them of the mutual ſympathy which thenceforward ſubſiſted between them.

I cannot reſiſt the temptation of mentioning a thought which has often occurred to me, upon this ſubject. There actually

actually ſeems obvious to me, from the character, the caſt of features, and throughout the whole air and perſon of the Ducheſs of Orleans, the appearance of that conflict which one may ſuppoſe to have ariſen, on this renewed tête à tête, between love and the jubilée.

Theſe two accouchements were treated with the utmoſt myſtery, and the children were concealed with great care. One of them was born at Maintenon, while the king ſerved a campaign, and Madame de Monteſpan with her ſiſter, Madame de Thyanges, reſided together there, during his abſence. But Madame de Maintenon was not encumbered with either of theſe children, as ſhe had been with the former brood.

brood. Monſieur de Louvois had them reared at Paris, in a little houſe at the end of the ſtreet de Vaugirard.

I remember to have ſeen them both, when I lived with Madame de Maintenon. They appeared after at Verſailles, but without any introduction. The beauty of the Count de Toulouſe ſurprized and dazzled every one that ſaw him. It was not ſo with Mademoiſelle de Blois, which was the ſtile ſhe went by, till her marriage; though her flatterers have ſince paid her great compliments on her beauty, which puffed up her vanity the higher, as it wa a praiſe ſhe was by no means intitled to.

Outward appearances had ever a great

great effect on the mind of Madame de Monteſpan, or at leaſt ſhe conſidered the effect they are too apt to have on the generality of the world, and the conſequences likely to flow from ſuch favourable prejudices, as a matter of great moment--it was probably owing to this idea that ſhe could hardly forgive Mademoiſelle de Blois for not being handſome.

Madame de Thyanges, whom I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak of ſometimes, was rather more abſurd and unreaſonable in this article, even than her ſiſter; and could not bear, as ſhe once ſaid, that the portion of blood of the Mortemar race, which this child carried in her veins, ſhould be capable of producing any creature that was not perfect.

Thus

Thus did the unfortunate Mademoiſelle de Blois paſs her life in hearing every day her natural defects imputed to her as faults, and being of a backward, though vain diſpoſition, ſhe ſeldom ſpoke, and therefore ſhewed nothing of thoſe other qualities ſhe was poſſeſſed of, which might have made ſome amends for ſuch deficiency. The king took compaſſion on her, on this account, and it might perhaps have been owing to this good natured ſentiment in him that he endowed her with ſo affluent a fortune; and raiſed her to ſo high a rank as ſhe afterwards attained.

The Ducheſs of Orleans was not, however, totally devoid of beauty, having a fair ſkin, a fine neck, hand-

ſome arms, and pretty hands; her deficiency lying moſtly in the diſproportion of her features. Madame de-Thyanges ſhould have had ſomewhat more indulgence for her, as ſhe was generally thought to reſemble her greatly.

As to her underſtanding it never was denied that ſhe poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare of that merit; though indeed it muſt be confeſſed that ſhe has ſhewn but very little of it, in her conduct with regard to her own family, ever ſince the death of the king.

I return now to Madame de Maintenon while ſhe lived with Madame de Monteſpan, and had the care of Monſieur du Maine till ſhe carried him abroad

abroad to ſeveral places, in ſearch of a cure for one of his legs. He had been born perfectly ſtraight and well made, and continued ſo till he was about three years old, when the cutting of his teeth happened to throw him into ſuch ſtrong convulſions, that it contracted his left leg.

All the faculty having applied remedies to it, without effect, he was carried to Anvers, and placed under the care of a ſurgeon who had been reckoned famous for ſuch cures. But as it was not thought proper to have Monſieur du Maine acknowledged at that time, as the king's ſon, Madame de Maintenon took this journey under the feigned perſonage of a woman of condition of Poitu, who had travelled

thither in queſt of a remedy for her ſon's malady.

The applications made uſe of by this empiric were ſo violent, that they lengthened the unfortunate limb, indeed, even longer than the other, but without ſtrengthening it; ſo that the extreme anguiſh he ſuffered under this experiment, ſerved only to leave ſuch a weakneſs in the joint, that he could only train the leg after him, ever ſince, as may be ſtill ſeen, at this day.

Notwithſtanding this ill ſucceſs, Monſieur du Maine was ſent upon two further errands to the waters of Barege, with as little effect as the former. And being generally known, though not yet acknowledged for the king's ſon,

he was every where received with thoſe honours that they would hardly have rendered to the dauphin.

Madame de Maintenon was very happy in paſſing through Poitu, and Xantonge, in the opportunity ſhe then had of reviſiting her native country, and ſeeing her relations and friends again. Monſieur d'Aubigné, her brother, who was at that time governor of Cognac, received and entertained Monſieur du Maine with a magnificence that might have pleaſed and flattered her greatly; but the principal ſatisfaction ſhe ſeemed to enjoy, through the whole courſe of her progreſs, was in this ſingle, and ſingular reflection, *that ſhe was not at court.*

She had another comfort alſo in the converſation and ſociety of Monſieur Fagon, who was travelling phyſician to the duke du Maine. It was upon this tour that a mutual friendſhip and eſteem was formed between them, which ſubſiſted without interruption during the remainder of their lives. The longer Monſieur Fagon was acquainted with Madame de Maintenon, the greater homage he paid and expreſſed for her underſtanding and virtue. I quote his opinion of her here as an allowed judge of real merit.

On her return from this expedition, the credit and influence of Madame de Maintenon encreaſed every day, while the power of Madame de Monteſpan diminiſhed in the ſame proportion; this

this was quickly perceived and reſented by the latter, inſomuch that Madame de Maintenon beginning to find her ſituation grow uneaſy, and who wiſhed ſtill to preſerve an intereſt in her favour, not having yet foreſeen how far her fortune meant to conduct her, purpoſed ſeriouſly to retire from court, deſiring nothing more than to enjoy the tranquillity and repoſe of her former happy, though humble ſtation.

This I am certain of, both from her own frequent declarations to me and from ſome of her letters which I have ſeen ſince her death written to a doctor of the Sorbonne, the Abbé Gobelin, who was her confeſſor. But her ſingular deſtiny would not ſuffer her to accompliſh ſo rational a purpoſe, and

every thing conſpired to prepare that high rôle for her which we have all ſeen her ſince perform.

I found beſides, in one of theſe letters, that they had formed a deſign of marrying her to the old duke of Villars, in order to provide for her with ſome appearance of decency: and I ſhall here quote you her own words upon this ſubject, writing to her confeſſor:

" Madame de Monteſpan, and Ma-
" dame de Richelieu are buſy at pré-
" ſent in making up a match for me,
" which I promiſe you ſhall never ob-
" tain—it is with an old duke, whoſe
" character is but indifferent, and his
" fortune poor: this would be a ſource
" of diſſatisfactions and embarraſſments,

" which

" which it would be unpardonable in
" me to engage in.—I have had too
" much of ſuch difficulties already in *a*
" *ſituation ſingular enough*, though then
" deemed an happy one, to go ſeek
" them again in a ſtate that I fear
" makes the misfortune of three fourths
" of the preſent world!"

The hint ſhe gives here (with regard to *a ſituation ſingular enough*) alludes to what was certainly a fact, and which probably ſhe had before revealed to her confeſſor, that ſhe was the *widow* of Monſieur Scarron, without having ever been his *wife*.

It is certain that the king, in the commencement of their acquaintance, had rather conceived a diſlike to Ma-

dame

dame de Maintenon, but then his prejudice againſt her aroſe from a ſort of awe of her ſenſe and ſeverity, joined to an apprehenſion of her having contracted ſome part of the affectation that the family of Rambouillet was remarkable for, of which the houſes of Albret and Richelieu (where ſhe uſed to ſhine) were branches and copies, though ſomewhat corrected, and that they wanted a Voiture to tranſmit to poſterity their ſentences and converſations.

They uſed to make a jeſt at court of theſe ingenious but idle coteries of affected wits, that ſpent their lives in develloping ſentiments, and criticiſing works of taſte and literature. Madame de Monteſpan herſelf, notwithſtanding the pleaſure ſhe had formerly enjoyed in

in ſuch ſocieties, uſed afterwards to turn them into ridicule, in order to divert her royal lover.

The diſlike of the king for Madame de Maintenon would have appeared to be more naturally accounted for had it ariſen from his knowing how highly ſhe condemned the ſcandal given to the whole kingdom, by his manner of living with a married woman, kept publickly aſunder from her huſband; for ſhe uſed often to let drop upon this ſubject ſuch ſevere ſtrictures as might not have been eaſily forgiven: I ſhall mention but one of them: ſhe ſaid one day to the king, at a review of the muſqueteers, *How would you behave, ſir, if you ſhould be now informed that any one of theſe ſoldiers lived openly with another man's*

man's wife, uſing as little reſerve with regard to her as if ſhe was his own?

I acknowledge, indeed, that I am not certain at what æra ſhe ventured to take the liberty of catechiſing him in this manner, and it may be probable, that it might not have been till after ſhe found herſelf pretty well eſtabliſhed in his favour; neither do I recollect what reply the king made to her on that occaſion, but the queſtion itſelf is certain, and ſuffices to ſhew what were the ſentiments and conduct of Madame de Maintenon (with regard to this particular) which was the more remarkable, as at that very time ſhe lived in friendſhip and connection with Madame de Monteſpan, and had the care and truſt of her children.

How-

However, the king ſo prejudiced at firſt againſt Madame de Maintenon, that whenever he mentioned her to Madame de Monteſpan it was generally with an air of ſarcaſm, ſtiling her nothing but *your genius*, *your bel eſprit*, yet on becoming more familiarly acquainted with her in the company of Madame de Monteſpan, and diſcovering the variety of entertaining talents ſhe was miſtreſs of, he from an humble ſenſe of his own inferiority in theſe reſpects, which one would not have thought him capable of, uſed to make it a point with his miſtreſs never to enter into converſation with her on thoſe evenings that he had paſſed any part of with her, being jealous leſt any compariſon might poſſibly be drawn between them to his diſadvantage.

Madame

Madame de Monteſpan kept her word with him at firſt, which Madame de Maintenon taking notice of, and obſerving that ſhe was only anſwered with a dry yes or no, ſaid to her, one evening, *This is a ſacrifice, I ſuppoſe, paid to his majeſty*—and roſe up haſtily to quit the room; but Madame de Monteſpan laid hold of her by the arm to prevent her going away, being well enough pleaſed at her having penetrated the myſtery *. Their converſation was but the more lively together after this eclairciſſement, and probably they might have repeated, but in a different ſenſe, what Ninon de l'Enclos had ſaid about her promiſſary note to the Marquis de la Châtres.

* Maintenon muſt have been a conjuror, for this myſtery was certainly beyond the reach of gueſſing.

The

The ſtory I allude to here, is this, the famous Ninon de l'Enclos had paſſed an obligation under her hand to the weak and jealous Marquis de la Châtres, that ſhe would be faithful to him during his abſence; but as ſoon as his back was turned, having engaged herſelf in ſome other amour, ſhe cried out, *What a reſponſible bond la Châtres has of mine!*

One may judge from the above inſtance, that the king was not incapable of ſentiment or delicacy; and that Madame de Monteſpan had no reaſon to reproach him, as ſhe did once upon ſome occaſion or other, with never having had any paſſion for her, but that he had merely indulged a vanity in being thought by the public to be loved by *the fineſt woman in his dominions.*

It is true that the king was not very faithful in his amours, and had during his connection with Madame de Monteſpan ſome other galantries which ſhe did not ſeem to make herſelf at all uneaſy about, and never appeared to take notice of, except as topics of converſation or raillery. However, I do not think that his engagement with Madame de Soubize was quite ſo indifferent a matter to her as ſhe uſed to pretend. She happened to diſcover this intrigue by the particularity of Madame de Soubize always putting on her emerald ear-rings whenever Monſieur de Soubize went to Paris—upon this idea ſhe watched the king, had him dogged, and found out that this was really the ſignal of aſſignation.

Madame

Madame de Soubize happened to have a very different ſort of huſband from Madame de Monteſpan, and this amour therefore required more management; otherwiſe Madame de Soubize had too maſculine a ſoul to trouble herſelf much about the ſaving of appearances, as the ſpirit of her philoſophy, or the phlegm of her temper (for aught I could diſtinguiſh) made her regard all delicacy of ſentiment, as mere feminine foible or affectation. Solely occupied about the intereſts and aggrandizement of her family, whatever did not ſtand in the way of ſuch proſpects, were to her but matters of indifference.

In order to be convinced that Madame de Soubize has made theſe views the whole meaſure of her conduct, it

may be ſufficient to reflect on the preſent condition of that family, and to compare it with what it was when ſhe firſt entered into it. Memorandum, Monſieur de Soubize had then ſcarcely ſix thouſand livres a year eſtate.

Madame de Soubize preſerved the ſame tenor of character, and purſued the ſame views, in the marriage of her ſon with the heireſs of the houſe of Ventadour, who was widow to the laſt prince of Turenne. Neither the public ſlander, nor the unwarrantable conduct of the perſon herſelf, were in her mind ſufficient bars to the union. In fine, her ſole conſideration was what Madame de Cornuelle ſaid upon the ſubject at that time, *that ſuch another match might not happen again in an age.*

To

To ſpeak impartially, I really believe that neither Madame de Soubize nor Madame de Monteſpan loved the king better, the one than the other. Ambition was equally their paſſion; the firſt for her family, the ſecond for herſelf. Madame de Soubize would elevate and enrich her kindred; Madame de Monteſpan would rule and have her power known.

But I ſhall not carry the parallel between them any farther, for if we except the face and perſon of Madame de Soubize, which were after all, but painting and ſtatuary, ſhe was in no ſort capable of diſputing a heart with Madame de Monteſpan. Her genius being more turned to buſineſs, rendered her converſation cold and vapid. Madame de Mon-

teſpan, on the contrary, treated the graveſt ſubjects in a lively manner, and gave an air of novelty to the moſt common.

Therefore, I believe that the king had never conceived any very ſtrong paſſion for Madame de Soubize, ſo that Madame de Monteſpan need not have rendered herſelf uneaſy on that account. Many people imagined that the cardinal de Rohan was ſon to the king by Madame de Soubize; but the only child he ever had by her, had been dead a good many years ago.

Notwithſtanding theſe infidelities of the king, I have often heard it ſaid, that Madame de Monteſpan might have ever preſerved her influence over him, if

if ſhe had not been ſo very ill-tempered, and depended too much on the aſcendant which ſhe thought ſhe had ſo firmly eſtabliſhed. That reflection which does not ſerve to conquer an untoward diſpoſition, is as little able to lure back again thoſe affections it has once ſuffered to take wing; and if mild diſpoſitions bear longer, their flight is irrecoverable.

The king found a remarkable difference in the temper and manner of Madame de Maintenon. In her he met with a woman always gentle and modeſt, ever miſtreſs of her words, looks, and actions; reaſonable in all things; and who to ſuch rare qualities joined the charms of wit and converſation.

However, ſhe had ſome trials to paſs through before ſhe was to diſcover the ſecret of his attachment to her; and one may well ſuppoſe that a woman whoſe temper was more violent than her deſire to pleaſe her lover, or her king, would not behave with greater mildneſs toward an humble companion whom ſhe looked upon in ſo inferior a light. It appeared even, that the ill-temper of Madame de Monteſpan increaſed in proportion to the reaſonableneſs and moderation ſhe diſcovered in Madame de Maintenon; and not unlikely the more for the abatement ſhe obſerved of the prejudices which the king had formerly ſhewn againſt her. It was, however, not eaſy to foreſee the conſequences which might one day poſſibly follow from this commencement of his eſteem.

I ſhall

I ſhall here recite ſome fragments of the letters that Madame de Maintenon wrote to the Abbé Gobelin, which are ſtill preſerved at St. Cyr, and one may there ſee better than I can deſcribe them both her ſufferings and her ſentiments at that time. It were indeed much to be wiſhed that thoſe letters had been dated, but the particulars I think ſufficiently point out the æra when they were written.

" Madame de Monteſpan and I have " had a ſharp altercation together lately, " ſhe has made a report of it to the " king, *in her own manner.* I confeſs " that I have had much difficulty with " myſelf for ſome time paſt to remain " in a ſituation which is every day ſub- " ject to ſuch incidents. What a tranſ-

" port would it be to return to liberty
" again! I have often had a mind to
" profeſs myſelf of ſome religious or-
" der or another, but the dread of poſ-
" ſibly living to repent my devotion,
" has hitherto ſuffered me to withſtand
" emotions which many people would
" probably have deemed *a call.*"

In another place, " I can never bring
" myſelf to ſuppoſe it to be the will of
" God that I ſhould daily ſuffer under
" Madame de Monteſpan. She is in-
" capable of friendſhip, and I can no
" longer ſupport my ſituation. It is
" impoſſible ſhe can encounter ſuch fre-
" quent oppoſition from me, without be-
" coming an enemy. She repreſents me
" to his majeſty in the light ſhe chooſes
" I ſhould appear, which will probably
" ſoon

" ſoon occaſion me the loſs of his " eſteem. I am at preſent in nice and " difficult circumſtances, which require " addreſs and management to conduct " me through."

In a third letter, " There has fallen " out a conſiderable breach yeſterday " between Madame de Monteſpan and " me; the king happened luckily to be " witneſs to it—ſuch diſagreeable events " joined to the conſtant ill-health of " their children have reduced me to a " condition of life that I can no longer " ſuſtain."

It is probably to this paſſage that may be referred what I have heard Madame de Maintenon mention, that being one day in a warm argument with Madame de

de Monteſpan, the king chanced to come in, and ſeeing them both ſo ſtrongly agitated in the diſpute, deſired to know what was the ſubject of their quarrel? upon which Madame de Maintenon (with great compoſure) replied, *If your majeſty will pleaſe to ſtep into another room with me I ſhall do myſelf the honour to acquaint you with it.*

The king immediately retired, Madame de Maintenon followed him, and Madame de Monteſpan remained where ſhe was. Her command of herſelf, upon this occaſion, muſt certainly appear to have been very extraordinary, and I confeſs that I could ſcarcely have given credit to it, from her general character, had it been poſſible for me to have doubted the veracity of Madame de Maintenon.

When

When ſhe was alone with the king ſhe ſpoke her ſentiments and reſentments both without reſerve, and painted the harſhneſs and unreaſonableneſs of Madame de Monteſpan's behaviour to her in ſuch lively colours that ſhe ſoon made him apprehend the exceſs to which her ungoverned violences might at ſome time or other be capable of tranſporting her.

The inſtances ſhe quoted in ſupport of her charge had been no ſecret to the king long before, but as he ſtill retained a fondneſs for her, [though without eſteem, which is natural to delicate and tender minds,] he laboured like a lover, in her excuſe; and to prove that her heart was not ſo hard as her behaviour might have at ſome times given occaſion to ſuſpect, he ſaid to Madame de:

de Maintenon, have you not frequently obſerved how her *lovely eyes* have filled and her *fair boſom* heaved on the recital of any generous ſentiment or affecting ſtory?

[Amiable weakneſs! charming prepoſſeſſion! how did he take part here, even againſt himſelf, in this infatuated woman's favour. With ſuch an impaſſioned diſpoſition, may it not fairly be preſumed (as I hinted at before) that ſhe might have preſerved her influence over this prince, even for life, had ſhe been but equal miſtreſs of her own foible?]

This conference between him and Madame de Maintenon was followed by ſeveral others, till at length the marriage

riage of the Dauphin afforded him an opportunity of eſtabliſhing her in a poſt of honour under the Dauphineſs, which finally reſcued her from the tyranny of Madame de Monteſpan.

However, before I quit this ſubject, truth obliges me to confeſs with Madame de Maintenon, that though Madame de Monteſpan had her failings, ſhe had alſo ſome excellent qualities: but in theſe ſhe was neither conſtant nor conſiſtent—her ſole ruling paſſion was a perſonal ambition, leaving to Madame de Thyanges, her ſiſter, the vanity of boaſting the advantages of her birth, which ſhe uſed frequently to ridicule her foible about.

Since I have introduced Madame de Thyanges here, I ſhall juſt mention a word

word or two of the three ſiſters, in this place: Madame de Monteſpan, ſaid the Abbé Teſtu, ſpeaks like a perſon who has read; Madame de Thyanges like one that thinks; and Madame de Fontevrault like one that converſes: he might have been right in his character of the other two, but not, I think, with regard to Madame de Monteſpan, whoſe elocution betrayed not the leaſt of that ſtiffneſs or affectation which ſeems here to have been pointed at.

I had not the honour to know Madame l'Abbeſſe de Fontevrault, but I have heard from all thoſe who were acquainted with her, that no body could have better ſenſe, with more wit or information—her knowledge was the effect of her reflection, rather than her learning.

learning.—A recluſe without ſuperſtition, ſhe conſtantly employed her time in a manner ſuited to her profeſſion; but neither her ſcience nor her ſtudies had impoſed the leaſt conſtraint on that eaſineſs and politeneſs of addreſs and demeanour which was natural to her.

Madame de Thyanges was poſſeſſed with two foibles, a vanity about her perſon, and her birth; ſhe had alſo a turn to raillery and ridicule, with ſome wit, a good ſhare of elocution, but nothing in the leaſt amiſs in her heart. She even reſented the harſhneſs and injuſtice of her ſiſter; and Madame de Maintenon has aſſured me, that ſhe had frequently met with conſolation from her, when the other had uſed her ill.

They tell many ſtories upon theſe weakneſſes of hers, but it will be ſufficient to ſay, that with regard to her family, ſhe acknowledged but two houſes in France, her own and that of Rochefaucault; and though ſhe admitted the blood-royal to be more illuſtrious, ſhe uſed to diſpute the antiquity of it, even before the king.

And as to her perſon, ſhe really looked upon it as the maſter-piece of nature; not quite ſo much on account of her outward beauty, as of the delicacy and ſymmetry of the organs which compoſed the whole of her anatomy: and to unite theſe two objects of her folly in one, ſhe imagined that the fineneſs and proportion of her form proceeded from the difference that her high birth had

had made between her and the generality of the world.

Madame de Thyanges was elder than Madame de Monteſpan by above ten years. Her mother was a matron of exemplary piety and ſevere conduct, which makes it difficult to account for her being educated with ſo much freedom as ſhe had ever ſhewn in her manners and behaviour. We ſhould not be much ſurprized at it, indeed, on the part of her father, the Duke de Mortemar, who, according to all accounts, was a profeſſed libertine.

I remember to have heard ſeveral replies of his repeated, which equally proved the diſſipation of his character, and the ill-temper of his wife.

He generally ſtaid out late, and one night that ſhe ſat up waiting for him, *Where have you been all this while*, ſaid ſhe, *and are you to ſpend your whole life in the company of a pack of devils? No matter where I have been*, he replied, *but this I will venture to affirm, that any one of my devils has more virtue in him than fifty ſuch angels as you pretend to be.*

I have heard the late king ſay, that Madame de Thyanges, when ſhe was a girl, uſed frequently to elope from home in order to aſſociate with him, and other young nobility who were educated with him, while they were at their meals, from a ſtrange notion ſhe had conceived, that *one never grows old at table*, which was a ſaying of hers that has been recorded.

Such a conduct did not promiſe much toward her proper preferment in life; however, ſhe married the Marquis de Thyanges, of the houſe of Damas, though ſhe brought him no other portion but that contempt which ſhe was ſo weak as ever to expreſs for any family that was not of her own blood or alliance. And as the eſtates of the houſe of Thyanges were in Burgundy, where ſhe was ſometimes obliged to reſide, the diſguſt ſhe conceived againſt the place had inſpired her with an averſion for all the people of that province, which ſhe preſerved to the end of her life, inſomuch that the higheſt reſentment ſhe could ever expreſs toward any one, was the calling them *a Burgundian.*

She had from this marriage a ſon and

two daughters—but ſhe ſaw nothing in the heir but a hint of that patrimony which ſhe deteſted. However, ſhe was made amends by her eldeſt daughter, in whom ſhe fancied that ſhe viewed her own reſemblance, which ſhe doated on. She married her to the Duke de Nevers; the youngeſt was wedded to the Duke de Sforce, and withdrew ſoon after with her huſband into Italy, and did not return to France till after the retreat of Madame de Monteſpan.

I ſaw her on her return, when ſhe was ſtill young enough to ſuffer one to judge of her beauty, but one could perceive nothing more than a fair ſkin, good eyes, and a hooked noſe turning towards a pair of vermilion lips; which gave occaſion to the Duke de Vendôme

to

to ſay, that *ſhe reſembled a parrot eating a cherry.*

Madame de Thyanges might have had ſome reaſon for admiring Madame de Nevers, as ſhe was really deemed handſome by every one who ſaw her, though nobody thought her like her mother, which was the idea that had firſt given her a partiality towards her.

Madame de Monteſpan, upon finding her own influence decline, in order to preſerve a ſway in ſome part of her family, at leaſt, did every thing in her power to inſpire the king with a paſſion for her niece; but he did not happen to fall into the lure—whether it was that the methods ſhe had taken for that purpoſe were ſo groſs as to have diſguſted

him, or that her charms might not have had the ſame effect upon him that they produced on a number of other admirers.

Upon a failure in this court intrigue, Madame de Nevers threw out her lure for Monſieur le Prince, ſtiled then only Monſieur le Duc *. Wit, galantry, and magnificence (where his affections were ingaged) made ſome amends in him for a figure which had more the apparition of a ghoſt, than the appearance of a man. He had marked his notice of Madame de Nevers by many circumſtances and attentions, of which I ſhall only relate the following one:

Monſieur de Nevers had an *impromptu* genius, both in poetry and life. He

* Duke of Bourbon, grandſon to the famous Prince of Condé.

uſed

uſed to ſet out on a journey of three or four hundred miles, with as little preparation as if he was only going to dine at a neighbour's villa; and Madame de Nevers had often gone into the carriage thinking ſhe was but going to take the air, when ſhe has heard her huſband direct the coachman to Naples, or to Rome.

But after having been often taken by ſurprize in that way, ſhe began to ſtand a little more upon her guard againſt him, and happening to diſcover his deſign once of taking her one of theſe ſudden marches, ſhe communicated her ſuſpicion to the prince, who equally fertile of invention as liberal of expence, whenever his taſtes or paſſions were in queſtion, judged readily from

the knowledge he had of the turn and character of Monſieur de Nevers, that he might eaſily divert him from his intended expedition, by affording him an occaſion of employing his talents and exerciſing his paſſion for poetry. He purpoſed, therefore, to give a maſque to the dauphin, at Chantilly.

He made the invitation, which was accepted of, then haſtened to Monſieur de Nevers, informed him of the entertainment, and pretending great difficulty about the choice of a poet to write the opera, begged of him to recommend him one capable of compoſing and conducting the whole performance—upon which, as the prince had expected, he offered his ſervice: in fine, the feſtival was held; it coſt above

above an hundred thouſand crowns *, and Madame de Nevers did not go her pilgrimage.

To conclude the article of Madame de Monteſpan's nieces, I ſhall juſt ſpeak a word of the eldeſt daughter of the Mareſchal de Vivonne, one of her brothers, and the only one of them who appeared at court during her favour there: ſhe was married to the prince d'Elbœuf, through the management and aſſiduity of Madame de Maintenon, who had taken compaſſion on her. For I do not know by what fatality it happened that her aunt found a difficulty of eſtabliſhing her in life, though neither beauty, wit, nor accompliſhments were deficient in her.

* *Plus de cent mille écus.* To ſhew that I have not exaggerated the extravagance.

Madame

Madame de Monteſpan, it has been ſaid, through ſome caprice or other, had no great affection for this girl, though ſhe never imputed the leaſt manner of fault to her, except that ſhe unfortunately had not a ſufficient air of dignity in her face and mien.

As to the Duke d'Elbœuf, every one knows the abuſe he has always made of his high birth, a bravery that was worthy of it, an handſome perſon, and a ſenſe and underſtanding in which nothing was wanting, but to know how to profit better of ſuch great and ſingular advantages of nature.

He had ſpent his younger days in diſturbing the peace of families, by his galantries, and in boaſting often of favours

favours which he had never received. And as he had not had any opportunity of placing thoſe of his wife among the number of his conqueſts, it ſeemed as if he meant to have made himſelf amends, by his uſual manner of treating her, and a moſt unjuſt conduct toward her.

Madame de Maintenon preſerved always with the Duke d'Elbœuf a freedom that ſhe had commenced with him in the houſe of Madame de Monteſpan, where they uſed to call him in jeſt nothing but the *vagabond* or *black-guard*, to mark the kind of life he led, and the ſort of company he generally kept; and ſhe has frequently given him reprimands which were as ineffectual as well received.

The

The king had a fondneſs for this prince; he always ſpoke to him with kindneſs, would pardon his faults, and could ſeldom refuſe him any thing he aſked: but there was no reclaiming him. His wife was rendered unhappy; and Madame de Monteſpan did not ſupport her well under her domeſtic misfortunes.

I return now to the character of the aunt, whoſe unfeeling heart has appeared on occaſions where it was uncommon to betray it, and more ſingular ſtill to boaſt of it. One day that her coach happened to run over a poor man, on the bridge of St. Germain, Madame de Montoſier, Madame de Richelieu, and Madame de Maintenon, who were with her, were ſeized with ſuch emotions as are natural in ſuch a ſituation, while Madame

Madame de Monteſpan appeared not to be the leaſt diſturbed about the matter, and even went ſo far as to reproach the reſt with their weakneſs: *If*, ſaid ſhe, *your concern aroſe from the tenderneſs of your hearts, and a real compaſſion for the object, you would feel as unhappy at this accident, had it happened fifty miles off, as under your feet.*

She joined to this hardneſs of heart a conſtant ſatirical turn of expreſſion, and uſed to make ill-natured remarks upon all the company who uſed to walk before her windows, while the king was ſitting with her: *One was ſo abſurd*, ſhe ſaid, *that their beſt friends might make a jeſt of them without the leaſt breach of morals*; of another, that was ſaid to be an honeſt man, *yes*, ſhe replied, *if one has*

has charity enough to take the will for the deed: one particular perſon, Monſieur de —— ſhe reſembled to the knave of diamonds, which placed him in ſo ridiculous a light, that it is ſurprizing how he ever came to puſh his fortune ſo well in life, ſince, as ſhe did not confine her ſarcaſms merely to his harlequin dreſs and figure, but expoſed the weakneſs of his underſtanding, and manner of expreſſing himſelf, with equal juſtneſs.

Theſe things may paſs for trifles, and may be ſo in effect, among equals, but it becomes a matter of conſequence where our ſuperiors come into queſtion: theſe ſatirical ſtrictures often interfere upon occaſions important, and perhaps deciſive, for our fortunes; in fine, few people paſſed before her uncenſured;

and

and frequently a courtier who has thought himſelf highly honoured in being introduced to her, has retired with no other effect from her reception of him, than to miſs his preferment, without being able to divine the cauſe.

However, notwithſtanding her faults, Madame de Monteſpan poſſeſſed ſome very uncommon qualities; ſhe had a greatneſs of ſoul, and an elevation of mind, which ſhe made ſufficiently appear by the preceptors that ſhe recommended to the king, for the tuition of the dauphin: in which ſhe conſidered, not only his preſent advantages, but the idea that poſterity ſhould conceive of his education, by the choice of thoſe perſons who had the direction of it—for, in reality, if one reflects upon the integrity and virtue

tue of Monſieur de Montoſier, the ſenſe and learning of Monſieur de Meaux, what an high opinion muſt one conceive, both of the king, who had made ſo judicious a proviſion for rearing the ſucceſſor to his dominions, and of the heir alſo, whom they muſt at leaſt ſuppoſe to be worthy of empire, becauſe he ought to have been ſo.

The world was then unacquainted with thoſe particulars, which have ſince let us into the character of Monſieur de Montoſier, and have convinced people that he was more fit to diſcourage a pupil, ſuch as the dauphin, born gentle, indolent, but obſtinate, than to inſpire him with becoming ſentiments.

The harſh manner in which he was driven

driven to his ſtudies, gave him ſuch an averſion to books, that he reſolved never to open one from the time he ſhould commence his own maſter—and he kept his word like a prince. But, as he was well born, and had a good model before his eyes in the perſon of the king, whom he loved and admired, his reign would have been happy, and tranquil enough—I ſay tranquil, becauſe that peace having been made, and knowing that the king had no deſign to recommence the war, he would never have thought of doing ſo of himſelf—at leaſt, never, I think, without having the juſtice of the cauſe on his ſide; ſo that we ſhould probably have ſeen no changes in his reign (except in the place of his reſidence) which I believe would have been divided between Paris and Meudon.

Madame de Monteſpan, with the ſame view toward the glory of the king, fixed upon Monſieur Racine, and Monſieur Deſpreaux, to write the hiſtory of his reign. If this was a flattery, one muſt confeſs that it was one of an uncommon woman, and no ordinary miſtreſs.

However, Madame de Monteſpan perceiving the king's affections to be weaned from her, when the loſs became irretrievable, ſhe endeavoured to ſupport her influence, for ſome time, by the help of Monſieur de la Rochefoucault, who was looked upon to be a ſort of favourite with the king—ſhe gained Monſieur de Louvois alſo over to her intereſts, and endeavoured to recover by intrigue what ſhe had forfeited by ill-

temper,

temper, and through the idle notion ſhe had conceived, that thoſe who have ſuperior parts muſt always govern thoſe whoſe talents are inferior. But what avail ſuch fancied advantages, where taſtes and paſſions once come into queſtion, which rarely ever take ſuch an article into account?

The king perhaps might not have been ſo ready in converſation as ſhe was, though nobody could ſpeak better in general. He thought juſtly, expreſſed himſelf nobly, and his replies the leaſt prepared, comprehended in the feweſt words the beſt that could poſſibly be ſaid, relative to the occaſion, the perſon, or the thing.

He poſſeſſed in a much higher degree

than his miſtreſs the art which gives one the advantage over others: for being never preſſed to ſpeak, he waited, examined, and dived into the characters and opinions which preſented themſelves before him; and as he was prudent, and knew well what weight is given to a king's expreſſions, he often reſerved in his own mind, whatever his penetration had ſerved him to diſcover.

If he was obliged to ſpeak upon ſtate affairs, he ſurprized the moſt knowing and ſkilful politicians with his judgment and addreſs; if he relaxed from buſineſs, engaged in familiar converſe, or told a ſtory, it was with infinite grace, and a turn of manners and expreſſion ſo noble and delicate as I never perceived in any other man ſo remarkably.

The

The principal view of Madame de Monteſpan, Monſieur de la Rochefoucault, and Monſieur de Louvois, was to ruin Madame de Maintenon by injuring her in the opinion of the king; but they entered into ſuch a conſpiracy too late. The friendſhip and eſteem he had conceived for her had already taken too deep a root; and her own manners and conduct were too pure and circumſpect to give the leaſt advantage to their envy and malice.

I do not know the particulars of this cabal, of which Madame de Maintenon had only ſpoken to me ſlightly, and but as one who ſeemed juſt to remember their ill offices enough to forgive them.

When I ſpoke of Monſieur de la Rochefoucault as a ſort of favourite, it was after the diſgrace of Monſieur de Lauzun, occaſioned by the inſolent manner in which he treated the king, upon the breaking off his marriage with Mademoiſelle de Montpenſier. He had then taken the reſolution never to have a favourite, that is, I mean a declared one. So that while Monſieur de la Rochefoucault enjoyed all the emoluments of ſuch a ſituation, the king kept himſelf clear from the inconveniences of ſo familiar a connexion.

Monſieur de Lauzun, not ſatisfied with merely eſpouſing Mademoiſelle, would have his marriage celebrated with all the magnificence and parade of two crowned heads; and by the long and vain

vain preparations that were making for it, he afforded time to Monſieur to work his point, and prevail on the king to revoke his conſent, which had been already given to the match.

Mad with reſentment, he preſerved no manner of decency with his ſovereign; in conſequence of which he was arreſted and thrown into priſon, where he ſuſtained a long and ſevere confinement for the improper liberty of ſpeech he made uſe of to his maſter.

Had it not been for the fooliſh vanity above-mentioned, this marriage had been perfected, the king, the event being over, would have calmed the reſentment of Monſieur, and Monſieur de Lauzun would have been himſelf pub-

lickly acknowledged the huſband of Henry the Fourth's grand-daughter, refuſed to ſo many kings and princes for fear of rendering them too powerful, and found himſelf couſen Germain to Lewis the Fourteenth. What a fortune and glory deſtroyed at once by ſo ill-placed a vanity!

Though poſſibly he might never have been able to have recommended himſelf to the notice of Mademoiſelle de Montpenſier, without having diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the haughtineſs of his character, and his being the only man who had ever dared to ſpeak perſonally to her of his paſſion: but as this extraordinary event is univerſally known, I ſhould not have taken it into my notes but on account of its ſingularity.

Mademoi-

Mademoiſelle de Montpenſier, weak, and ſubject to ſtrong paſſions, which ſhe ſuſtained but ill, did not diſguiſe her grief upon the breaking off the marriage: ſhe took to her bed, and received viſits like a diſconſolate widow; and I have heard Madame de Maintenon ſay, that in her extravagance, ſhe would often cry out, *He ſhould be there, he ſhould be there*, pointing to the vacant place in her bed.

It has been ſaid, but without any manner of juſtice, that Monſieur de Lauzun had had an amour with Madame de Monteſpan before ſhe had been miſtreſs to the king. But there was not the leaſt truth in this report, if I can give credit to Madame de Maintenon's knowledge and opinion in the matter.

After

After ſome time Mademoiſelle de Montpenſier negotiated with Madame de Monteſpan the releaſe of Monſieur de Lauzun, and it was on this conſideration that ſhe made the Duke of Maine a preſent of the ſovereignty of Dombes, and of the county of Eu. But Monſieur de Lauzun only juſt appeared at court, once, to make his bow to the king, and lived afterwards quite retired at Paris, till the revolution of England, of which I ſhall ſpeak, in ſome other place.

The Dauphin married, in 1680, and Madame de Maintenon being appointed one of his houſehold, as I ſaid before, had, from that time, no farther connection with Madame de Monteſpan.

They

They never viſited each other, from that time, but wherever they happened to meet, at any third place, they always entered into converſation together, in ſo lively and affectionate a manner to all appearance, that every one who was preſent, and ignorant of the court ſecret, would have imagined them to have been the moſt cordial friends in the world.

Their converſations generally turned upon the king's children by Madame de Monteſpan, with regard to whom they had ever borne a mutual concern. The familiarity they had formerly lived in, with the reliſh they had before conceived for each other's converſation, ſerved alſo to aſſociate them more ſtrongly together, whenever they happened to meet.

With

With regard to theſe particulars, their inward diſguſts, and outward behaviour, I remember to have heard a ſtory of their having been once occaſionally obliged to travel together, upon ſome court party, in the ſame coach. Upon which Madame de Monteſpan, on ſtepping in, ſaid to Madame de Maintenon, *Let us not become the dupes of this accident, but converſe together with the ſame eaſe and freedom, as ever; ſtill bearing in mind,* added ſhe, *that we are not to love one another a bit the better, on that account, and are to renew our piques and reſentments toward each other, the moment this party is at an end.* Madame de Maintenon accepted the propoſition, and they both acquitted themſelves perfectly well of their engagements.

The

The king, before he named Madame de Maintenon ſecond attire-woman to the dauphineſs, had the reſpect for Madame la Maréchale de Rochefort to aſk her, if ſuch a companion in office might be agreeable to her, aſſuring her, at the ſame time, that ſhe ſhould have nothing to do with the wardrobe.

The conduct of Madame de Maintenon was anſwerable to this promiſe. Her favour occupied her whole attention; and her character, beſides, would not have ſuffered her to interfere in any kind of buſineſs, which ſhe was deſired not to meddle with.

The Ducheſs of Richelieu was appointed lady of the bedchamber to the dauphineſs. Madame de Maintenon, and

and Madame de Monteſpan, both had, upon all occaſions, poſſeſſed the king with ſo high an opinion of her, that he could not think of giving her the diſguſt of placing her in any inferior ſtation in the houſehold.

He alſo named the Duke of Richelieu firſt gentleman uſher to the dauphin, in compliment to her. And here, I think, I may fairly take occaſion to ſpeak of the houſe of Richelieu, as I promiſed before.

Madame de Richelieu, without fortune, beauty, youth, and even without much underſtanding, had notwithſtanding, by her addreſs, to the great aſtoniſhment of the whole court, and of the queen mother, who oppoſed it all

in her power, contrived to marry herſelf to the heir of Cardinal Richelieu, a man poſſeſſed of the higheſt dignities in the kingdom, perfectly handſome in his perſon, and young enough to have been her ſon.

But it was an eaſy thing to captivate Monſieur Richelieu; for with a little gentleneſs of manners, and ſome compliments paid to his figure, his ſenſe, or character, one might obtain what they pleaſed from him—They had only to guard themſelves againſt his natural fickleneſs, for he would be charmed with a perſon, or thing, one day, and diſguſted with them the next.

Madame de Maintenon uſed to tell me that his friends and favourites always

ways knew the place they held in his affections, by the ſituation of their pictures in his apartment.

At the commencement of an acquaintance which happened to inſpire him with any idea of friendſhip, he immediately had the perſon's picture drawn, and placed it at the head of his bed; but by degrees it gave place to others, till it was ſhoved firſt to the door, then gained the anti-chamber, was afterwards hung up in the garret, and no further thought of.

Madame de Richelieu continued after their marriage to humour the foibles, and indulge the caprices of her huſband. She ſaw him ruining his fortune, before her eyes, by play and extravagance,

travagance, without ever appearing, one inſtant, to be out of humour about it.

They had both of them a taſte for perſons of literature and talents, and gathered about them every diſtinguiſhed character of genius in Paris, both men and women, as the Mareſchal d'Albret uſed to do; and they were pretty nearly the ſame company too, except the Abbè Teſtu, an intimate friend of Madame de Richelieu, who aſſumed the lead at the hôtel de Richelieu, and looked upon himſelf as the voiture of that aſſembly.

He was a perſon extremely ſelf-ſufficient, of confined knowledge, and vindictive in argument. He had there-

fore no reliſh for the ſociety of men, and would rather ſhine alone in a circle of women, whom he might more eaſily impoſe on, or flatter more or leſs, as he happened to like them. He was but a middling verſifier, and his ſtile was ſurfeiting, with points and antitheſes.

The Abbè Teſtu's general commerce with women ſerved to hurt his preferment; for the king could never be brought to nominate him to a biſhoprick, on that account. I remember that one day, I heard Madame d'Heudicourt ſpeak to the king, in his favour, and upon his ſaying that his deportment was not ſolemn enough to command reſpect from others, *He is waiting to make it ſo*, ſhe replied, *till* your

your majeſty has given him a pretence to aſſume appearances.

Madame de Coulanges, wife to the author of ſo many ballads, was an addition to the agreeable ſociety, at the hôtel de Richelieu. She had a lovely figure, and a lively wit. Her converſation ſparkled with quick turns, and ſhining expreſſions, which ſtile was ſo extremely natural to her, that the Abbè Gobelin ſaid, after a general confeſſion ſhe had made before him, once, that *every ſin of Madame de Coulanges was an epigram.* No body, in truth, after Madame Cornuele, has ſcattered more bons mots, than Madame de Coulanges.

Monſieur de Barillon, enamoured of

Madame de Maintenon, and ſlighted as a lover, though much eſteemed as a friend, was by no means one of the leaſt reſpectable among the gueſts at the hôtel. I never ſaw him till after his return from his embaſſy to England; about which time he found Madame de Maintenon arrived at the height of her favour; and one day ſeeing the king and the whole court forming a circle around her, he could not avoid ſaying, quite aloud, *my taſte ſtands juſtified, at leaſt.*

Another day, being vexed at not being able to get up to ſpeak to her, for the croud that encompaſſed her, upon hearing a loud laugh, and a vaſt deal of prate among the ladies who were with her, he ſaid, *he was ſurprized how a per-*

a perſon of her ſenſe and taſte could poſſibly ſuffer herſelf to be amuſed with the inſipid mirth, and impertinent goſſipings of ſuch a boarding ſchool holyday converſation, as ſhe ſeemed then to be involved in. This expreſſion was afterwards repeated to her, and did not diſpleaſe her, as ſhe thought, and indeed, juſtly, that there was a good deal of home truth in the reproof.

The Cardinal d'Eſtrées was not leſs enamoured of Madame de Maintenon, at the time I am ſpeaking of, and wrote ſeveral polite and galant pieces in her praiſe, which, without touching her heart, flattered her, however, ſufficiently, another way—[She was but a woman; though had ſhe been a man, would it have made any difference in the caſe, I pray you?]

Monſieur de Guillerague, by the conſtancy of his paſſion, his wit, and poetry, ſhould alſo be allowed a place among the admirers of Madame de Maintenon. In fine, I never ſaw nor heard any thing ſaid of the hôtel de Richelieu, which did not preſent one with an equal opinion, both of her attractions, and her virtue.

Mademoiſelle de Pons, ſince Madame d'Heudicourt, and Madame la Mareſchale de Schomberg, who were likewiſe of that ſociety, had alſo their declared lovers, but without the leaſt ſtain falling on the reputation of the latter. And if they ſpeak differently of Madame d'Heudicourt, it was becauſe they did not, in thoſe days, conſider an avowed attachment, which was

attended

attended with nothing more than public galantries, in the ſame light that one is apt to view an engagement which ſtrives to conceal itſelf, and where there appears to be rather an air of myſtery in the conduct of it.

Madame de Schomberg was merely vain, coquettiſh, and fond of admiration. Madame d'Heudicourt capricious, a free ſpeaker, without judgment, but full of a lively and entertaining imagination. Which made Madame de Maintenon ſay to me often, *Madame d'Heudicourt never opens her mouth, but ſhe makes me laugh, and yet I do not remember that ever I heard her ſay any one thing, in my life, that I ſhould wiſh to have ſaid myſelf.*

But it is now time to take leave of the hôtel de Richelieu, return to the court, and proceed with what I began to relate of the houſehold of the dauphineſs of Bavaria; where Madame de Maintenon bore great ſway, both in the appointment of Madame de Richelieu, and other preferments on that eſtabliſhment.

However Madame de Richelieu loved Madame de Maintenon only in her private ſtation, and the repoſe of a retired life. The jealouſy, at ſeeing her arrived to an height of favour, which ſhe thought herſelf more worthy of attaining to, was too ſtrong for her former affection, her eſteem or gratitude. The firſt place in the confidence of the monarch, ſeemed to her a flight

a flight too high to be forgiven to her old friend; but deſpairing of being able to rival her there, ſhe applied her arts to the management of the dauphineſs, and by poſſeſſing her with fears, ſuſpicions, and a number of falſe ideas, ſhe confirmed her in a diſreliſh to the world, which that princeſs ſeemed to have conceived for it too much already.

The dauphineſs perceived the neceſſity there was of ſtanding well with the favourite, in order to preſerve an intereſt with the king her father-in-law; but conſidering her, at the ſame time, as a dangerous perſon whom ſhe could not be too much on her guard againſt, ſhe determined on a retreat from court, which, as before hinted, ſhe was naturally

rally inclined to; and never diſcovered, till after the death of Madame de Richelieu, upon an explanation ſhe had once with Madame de Maintenon, the falſe conception of things ſhe had frequently deceived her into. Being ſurprized to ſee Madame de Maintenon manifeſt ſo much concern for her death, ſhe expreſſed her amazement upon it, which led naturally to a converſation that brought to light the whole baſeneſs of this faithleſs friend.

If this eclairciſſement ſupplied Madame de Maintenon with ſome motive of conſolation, ſhe could not reflect without concern on her having been ſo much impoſed upon, before. However it produced a moſt favourable alteration in the mind of the princeſs, who,

who, in order to make Madame de Maintenon ſome amends, and attach her more ſtrongly to her, named her lady of the bedchamber, in the room of Madame de Richelieu, and intreated his majeſty to confirm her in the poſt, with all the earneſtneſs of a fond affection.

The king had before conceived the ſame purpoſe, on the very inſtant of Madame de Richelieu's death; but Madame de Maintenon reſolutely refuſed to accept of an honour, which her modeſty ſuffered her to think above her pretenſions. This is certainly what ſhe alludes to, in one of her letters to Monſieur d'Aubigné, her brother, which I have read, and is among thoſe manuſcripts of hers ſtill preſerved at St. Cyr;

Cyr; and as I am of opinion that no one can poſſibly ſpeak better for her, than ſhe is capable of doing herſelf, I ſhall here copy out that paragraph of her letter, which I think relates to the preſent ſubject.

" I could not get you appointed " conſtable, when I would have done " it; and now that it may be in my " power, I decline it, being incapable " of aſking any thing unreaſonable " from one, to whom I am myſelf in- " debted for every thing. I would " not even accept of any honour for " myſelf, which I did not think I was " in ſome ſort intitled to.

" Theſe are ſentiments, which you " may, probably, think rather too " highly

" highly ſtrained, but it is poſſible
" alſo, that if I had not that founda-
" tion of honour in me which inſpires
" them, I ſhould never have arrived at
" the ſituation I am at preſent placed
" in. Be that as it may, you are ſuf-
" ficiently happy, in your own, if you
" have but ſenſe and virtue."

Madame de Maintenon's refuſal of this poſt, made a great noiſe at court. The generality of the world ſuſpected more of vain-glory than modeſty in it; and to confeſs the truth, young as I was, at that time, I was myſelf of the ſame opinion. I remember that ſhe ſent for me, one day, as ſhe uſed to do, to know my ſentiments upon the occaſion, and aſked me whether I would chooſe to be the niece of the perſon

who

who was capable of refuſing ſuch an honour, or of one who would have willingly accepted of it? to which I readily replied, that the firſt appeared in my mind, to be much the *higher character*. She was ſatisfied with my anſwer, and embraced me.

It was neceſſary then to appoint ſome body elſe to this office; but as Madame de Navailles, who had been lady of the bedchamber to the late queen, had given the king a diſguſt to thoſe who were untractable, and apt to be too quick ſighted, in that department, thoſe who ſucceeded her, except Madame de Richelieu, diſguſted him equally in their turn, with their too great ſubmiſſion, and want of ſpirit.

It was, in truth, a difficult thing to find, in the ſame perſon, rank, virtue, ſpirit, and deportment; and the number of ducheſſes, however great, being notwithſtanding limited, with regard to theſe characters, the king was really embarraſſed in his choice. Madame de Maintenon endeavoured, but in vain, to determine him in favour of the Ducheſs de Crequi, who had been a lady of the bedchamber to the late queen. His only reply was, *O Madam, let us, at leaſt, change fools, if we can do nothing elſe.*

This opportunity then appeared favourable for the Ducheſs d'Arpajou, her old friend, and ſiſter to the Marquis de Beuvron, whom ſhe was glad of an opportunity of obliging by this

recommendation. The king accepted of her, and Madame d'Arpajou filled the ſtation with perfect ſatisfaction to all parties.

Madame de Maintenon placed alſo in the houſehold of the dauphineſs, Madame de Montchevreüil, a woman of merit, indeed, if one were to reſtrain the expreſſion to chaſtity, merely; for otherwiſe ſhe was cold and dry in ſociety, of a diſmal figure, her ſenſe below the middle rank of underſtanding, and of a zeal capable of diſguſting the greateſt devotees in piety; but attached greatly to Madame de Maintenon, who thought it incumbent on her to produce at court an old friend of an irreproachable character, with whom ſhe had ever lived in the ſtricteſt intimacy.

I neither remember the occaſion nor the commencement of their acquaintance; all I know is that Madame de Maintenon uſed frequently, when ſhe was a young woman, to reſide for a conſiderable part of the year, at Montchevreüil.

I ſhall not pretend to deny my having heard ſome reports relative to Monſieur de Villarceaux, a relation, and intimate friend of Monſieur de Montchevreüil. If it was through him that this connexion was formed, it decides nothing, however, againſt Madame de Maintenon, as ſhe never made the leaſt ſecret of it that he was among the number of her friends. She intereſted herſelf even for his ſon, and obtained the cordon-bleu, or order of the holy ghoſt, for him.

A letter of hers may ſtill be ſeen, among the collection at St. Cyr, written to Madame de Villarceaux, where ſhe gives an account of the proceſſion of the king, at Paris, after his marriage, in which ſhe ſpeaks of this ſame Monſieur de Villarceaux, in the following words:

"I looked out for Monſieur de Villarceaux, but he rode ſo unruly a horſe, that he had ſprung within a few paces of me, before I knew him. He looked extremely well, and was one of the genteeleſt dreſt, though not the richeſt. His dark coloured cloaths became his complexion very well, and he rides with remarkable grace."

However, though perfectly perſuaded of

of Madame de Maintenon's virtue, I will not carry it ſo far as Monſieur de Laſſẽ did, who affirming two peremptorily one day, that what had ever been ſaid upon this ſubject was abſolutely falſe, led his wife, who was natural daughter to Monſieur, to aſk him a ſingular queſtion. Tired with the tediouſneſs of the diſpute, and ſurprized how her huſband could be ſo well convinced as he appeared to be, ſhe ſaid to him, with the greateſt calmneſs imaginable, *How have you contrived, Sir, to be ſo very particularly informed in all this matter?*

As for my part, it is ſufficient for me to declare that I do verily believe whatever reports have obtained abroad, to the diſadvantage of Madame de Maintenon's character, were either for-

gery, or miſtake; and I have ſaid enough here to ſhew that I have heard them.

I return again to Madame de Montchevreüil, for whom all the friendſhip and favour of Madame de Maintenon could only procure the place of governeſs to the maids of honour. It was a ſmall poſt for her, but they added great diſtinctions to it. She was conſidered as a fourth lady in waiting, who attended on the dauphineſs when the ladies of the bed-chamber, and the attire-woman were not in the preſence, and her department, compoſed of the higheſt names in the kingdom, was eſtabliſhed upon a more reſpectable footing, than the maids of honour to the queen had formerly been.

The

The king, who was young and galant in thoſe days, had introduced great irregularities among them, at firſt. Every one has heard of the quarrels he uſed to have with Madame de Navailles about a garden-door that ſhe had ſtopt up, in order to interrupt certain nightly viſits which her virtue was offended at.

She told the king to his face, that ſhe would ever do her duty while ſhe was continued in office, and would not ſuffer the conduct of the maids of honour to become a reproach to her: upon which the king transferred them to the department of the counteſs of Soiſſons, who was ſuperintendante.

Madame de Navailles always ſup-

ported her rights with ſpirit and firmneſs, which at length drew upon her an honourable diſgrace, which her huſband had virtue enough to ſhare with her, by retiring from court at the ſame time. But at preſent, the king inſtructed by his own experience, and tamed by years, neglected nothing that might place the maids of honour to the dauphineſs upon the propereſt and moſt decent footing. I ſhall give you the names, and, as near as I can, the characters of the ſix principal ones.

Mademoiſelle de Laval had a good air, a fine ſize, an agreeable countenance, and danced perfectly well: it was whiſpered that the king liked her, but there never was any certainty of that matter. He married her to Monſieur

ſieur de Roquelaure, and conferred on him the rank of duke, by brevet, which his father had obtained before.

The firſt views of Monſieur de Roquelaure were not directed toward Mademoiſelle de Laval. The favour of Madame de Maintenon (which he ſaw increaſing every day) made him turn his thoughts firſt on me; but he propoſed for me in vain. Madame de Maintenon anſwered him, that I was too young to be thrown into life at that time, and recommended Mademoiſelle de Laval to him.

This ſurprized him ſo much, that he could not help crying out, *What! marry a woman whoſe reputation is doubtful, at beſt? and who can warrant me that the*

report is groundleſs? I can, replied Madame de Maintenon, *I have an opportunity of a nearer inſight into ſuch things than others, and I can have no intereſt in impoſing on you.*

He took her word, and the marriage was concluded; but the world happening to be leſs credulous than he, ſpoke freely upon this point, to the great mortification of Monſieur de Roquelaure, and made ballads upon it, as they do in Paris on all occaſions.

Mademoiſelle de Biron was not young —they ſaid, that ſhe had been handſome, but there was not any remains of it at that time. Therefore ſince ſhe could not avail herſelf of paſt charms, ſhe turned her thoughts to art and cabal, which

which her genius naturally led her to. She contrived to wind herſelf into the ſecrets of miniſterial intrigue, by which ſhe rendered herſelf uſeful to the dauphin, and by ſuch addreſs obtained from the court a ſufficient eſtabliſhment to marry herſelf to advantage.

Mademoiſelle de Gontaut, her ſiſter, had beauty, with a ſlight underſtanding; but was bleſt with ſo much ſoftneſs and evenneſs of temper, that ſhe was both loved and eſteemed, by all that knew her. The king married her to the Marquis d'Urfé, whom he had appointed one of the aid de camps to the dauphin.

Mademoiſelle de Tonnerre was not handſome, but had a fine perſon—ſhe was

was ſilly, and unhappy. Monſieur de Rhodes, maſter of the ceremonies (who happened to be rather a greater fool than ſhe) fell in love with her, and carried his indiſcretions toward her ſo publicly, that ſhe was diſcarded from court. And Madame de Richelieu, from a falſe notion of auſterity, which became the ton, after the reformation of the king; ſent her to Paris, in a manner that gave offence to decency, and was condemned by every body; which was in one of the travelling coaches, with two or three of the chambermaids.

Mademoiſelle de Rambures had the character of the Nugent family, from her mother: lively, forward, and poſſeſſed of that kind of addreſs and manner which often engages men, even where

where beauty (as was the caſe here) is wanting. She attacked the king, and won him ſo far as to incline him more generally to addreſs his diſcourſe to her, in public, than to any of the other ladies of the court. She then hung out her lure for the dauphin, with whom, it is ſaid, ſhe carried her point, more effectually. The dauphineſs was diſtracted with jealouſy, but ſhe might blame her own ill temper and conduct for the loſs of the prince's affections.

Mademoiſelle de Jarnac, homely and unhealthy, will not take up much room in theſe notes. She lived but a ſhort time, and miſerably. She had, they ſay, a good ſkin, which was the only apology ſhe had to offer for her uglineſs.

Mademoi-

Mademoiſelle de Leweſthein, ſince Madame de Dangeau, became maid of honour, on the marriage of Mademoiſelle de Laval, and as I ſhall have frequent occaſion to mention her *, I ſhall here give you, *en paſſant*, a ſlight deſcription of her perſon and character.

She was of the Palatine family; but one of her anceſtors, on account of his having married a private gentlewoman, loſt his rank, and his poſterity have never ſince been conſidered as ſovereign princes. But the Meſſieurs de Leweſthein have ever borne the name and the arms of the Palatines, and have ſince become counts of the empire, and allied to ſome of the beſt families in Germany.

The cardinal de Furſtemberg, after

* And yet ſhe never mentions her afterwards.

a long

a long and ſevere confinement, which his attachment to France had been the occaſion of, came to ſettle himſelf here, and brought his niece along with him (whom we are now ſpeaking of) ſhe was of remarkable beauty, and had a fine perſon, which a crimſon riband that ſhe wore acroſs her ſhoulder, like the knights of the garter, as ſhe was a chanoineſs, gave an additional grace to. But her ſenſe and virtue were infinitely ſuperior to all her perſonal charms.

And yet her high birth, with all her other merits both of body and mind, could find none but Monſieur de Dangeau capable of rating their value. He was a widower, and had a daughter by his firſt wife; but he was gentleman uſher to the dauphineſs, an office he had

had purchaſed from the duke of Richelieu, Menin, or aid de camp to the dauphin, and had a conſiderable fortune beſides, which were ſufficient recommendations.

Some difficulty happened to ariſe, about filling up the marriage ſettlement. The dauphineſs, ſurprized to find her take the ſtile of a princeſs, would have that addition ſtruck out. Madame * concurred with her in this article: but her right to that title was ſo clearly made out, that the princeſſes withdrew their objection; and Madame particularly, ever after, rendered her every reſpect that was due to her birth and merit, and ſhewed her every inſtance of friendſhip in her power.

* The title of the wife of the king's brother.

The

The dauphineſs was not only homely, but had ſomething ſo diſguſting in her appearance, that Monſieur Sanguin ſent by the king to Bavaria, on treaty about her marriage, could not avoid ſaying to him, on his return, *Be on your guard, ſire, on the firſt view.* And yet, the dauphin happened to conceive an affection for her, and would have continued conſtant, if her great ill temper had not worn out his patience, and forced him to ſearch for conſolation and amuſement elſewhere.

The king, from an indulgence which he had afterwards reaſon to be ſorry for, ſuffered her to retain a German girl in her ſervice, who had been reared with her, and was about the ſame age: this girl, whoſe name was Beſſola, though with-

without any fault in herſelf, did her miſtreſs a conſiderable injury, and gave the king a good deal of uneaſineſs. She was the cauſe that the dauphineſs, from the liberty ſhe had been permitted of converſing and ſpeaking German with her, became ſoon averſe to any other ſociety, and remained ſtill a ſtranger in this country.

Perhaps ſome good qualities, which notwithſtanding her unhappy temper this princeſs really poſſeſſed, might have contributed to this eſtrangement; for being an enemy to ridicule and detraction, ſhe could not endure the ſlander and raillery which was then too much the ſtile at court, and the leſs as ſhe happened to be totally unacquainted with the turns of expreſſion and natural livelineſs of French converſation.

In truth, I have ſeen other foreigners too, even ſome whoſe ſpirit and manners ſeemed to approach neareſt to our own, frequently diſconcerted by our conſtant irony; and even the princeſs of Savoy, our ſecond dauphineſs, who had been reared in France from her infancy, could never find herſelf perfectly at eaſe among us; and often uſed to ſay to Madame de Maintenon, whom ſhe uſed generally to ſtile her aunt, from a ſort of friendly fondneſs which ſhe had conceived for her: *My dear aunt, they make a jeſt of every thing here.*

In fine, the good or the bad qualities of the dauphineſs, joined to her attachment to Beſſola, inclined her intirely to a retired life very unbecoming a perſon of her rank and ſituation. The king

made ſeveral vain efforts to conquer this diſpoſition in her, and offered to marry the girl to ſome perſon of diſtinction, ſo as to intitle her to become one of her parties in a more general commerce with the world. But the dauphineſs refuſed this eſtabliſhment for her friend, from either a pretended or a ridiculous delicacy, by ſaying, that *The heart of Beſſola would then be divided.*

However, the king, ſupported by the counſels of Madame de Maintenon, and no longer now engroſſed by his miſtreſſes, was not diſcouraged by this reply, but ſtill hoped, by the means of ſoothings, and that remarkable noble and polite manner which accompanied all his favours, to be able to reclaim the dauphineſs, and prevail on her to keep her court.

I re-

I remember to have heard it ſaid, and to have ſeen it too, that he has often gone to viſit her, carrying a parcel of rare trinkets and rich ſilks along with him, which he would firſt let her take her choice of, and dividing the remainder into portions, would make her maids of honour, and any other ladies who happened to be preſent, caſt lots for.

At other times, he would admit them to the honour of playing for the ſtakes with the dauphineſs, and even condeſcended to cut in himſelf often on ſuch occaſions. And while pharo was permitted, before his majeſty's proper conſideration had prohibited ſo dangerous a game, he uſed to hold a bank at the apartments of the dauphineſs, for her women to punt at, but always ſtaked louis' himſelf againſt their livres.

Such amiable and engaging manners, which would have charmed any other daughter-in-law, were thrown away upon the Dauphineſs, and ſhe received all his kindneſſes with ſo uncouth a grace, that he at length gave over the purſuit, reſigning her intirely up to her favourite ſolitude; and the whole court abandoned her alſo along with him.

She paſſed the remainder of her life in ſome ſmall cloſets at the back of her apartments, ſecluded from all view and air, which, joined to a certain natural melancholy temper of mind, threw her at laſt into the vapours, which, being treated as a real diſorder, occaſioned her to be plied with ſuch ſtrong medicines, that the remedy becoming worſe than the diſeaſe, put an early period to her life,

life, after having given us three princes. She died under a perſuaſion that her laſt lying-in had been the ſole cauſe of her death, and on giving her bleſſing to the duke of Berry, *Ah, my child*, ſaid ſhe, *your life has coſt me mine.*

It was eaſy to ſuppoſe, that a young prince (as the dauphin then was) muſt ſoon have become infinitely weary of paſſing his life in the ſole ſociety of his wife and her favourite; eſpecially as they ſhewed no manner of attention toward him, but converſed together intirely in German, which was a language he did not underſtand.

However, he held out, for ſome time, from the real affection he had at firſt ſo unaccountably conceived for her; but at length being completely diſguſted, both

both with her temper and her manners, he began to amuſe himſelf abroad, and firſt broke ground with frequenting the aſſemblies of the princeſs de Conti, who was the king's daughter by Madame de la Valiere.

Here he found every thing juſt as it ſhould be in life; eaſe, freedom, youth, cheerfulneſs, and complaiſance; ſo that for the future he left Madame la Dauphine at home ſhut up in her cloſets, to indulge her unſociable tête à têtes with her German favourite, without further interruption.

She became outrageous when ſhe perceived the evil paſt relief, and threw out moſt heavy aſperſions againſt the princeſs of Conti; but neither her reſentments

ſentments againſt her, nor her curtain lectures with the dauphin, were able to remedy the misfortune. If princes are mild, they are alſo obſtinate; and as I ſaid before of the king, if they eſcape us once, no lure can ever recal them. Madame de Maintenon had foreſeen this rupture, and advertiſed her of it frequently, without effect.

The End of the First Volume.

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